

Banke, Goumen & Smirnova
Literary Agency

TRANSLATION RIGHTS CATALOGUE

LITERARY FICTION

QUALITY COMMERCIAL FICTION

YA & NON-FICTION

2025

List of Authors

NARINE ABGARYAN
SONA ABGARYAN
LIUBOV BARINOVA
DANIEL BERGER
ZHENYA BERKOVICH
LEONID BERSHIDSKY
KSENIA BUKSHA & ARTHUR
BONDAR DENIS BUSHLATOV
SVETA DOROSHEVA
LENA ELTANG
ALLA GORBUNOVA
KATERINA GORDEEVA
SERGEY KUZNETSOV
YANA LETT
VLADIMIR MEDVEDEV
NATALIYA MESHCHANINOVA
YANA MOSKALENKO
VALENTINA NAZAROVA
MIKE OMER
LUDMILLA PETRUSHEVSKAYA
IVAN PHILIPPOV
EDWARD REZNIK
DINA RUBINA
KIRILL RYABOV
KARINA SHAINYAN
MIKHAIL SHISHKIN
MARINA STEPNOVA
MIKHAIL TURBIN
YANA VAGNER
TATSIANA ZAMIROVSKAYA
KONSTANTIN ZARUBIN



About the agency:

BANKE, GOUMEN & SMIRNOVA AGENCY is a leading rights agency based in Sweden and Cyprus. We specialize in handling book and film rights, with a primary emphasis on fiction encompassing a wide spectrum, from highly literary works to commercial titles with mass-market appeal. Our list includes writers from countries like Russia, Ukraine, Armenia, Belarus, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan, and other nations.

As literary agents, we have the privilege of representing some of the most prominent award-winning contemporary authors, such as Ludmilla Petrushevskaya, Mikhail Shishkin, Eugene Vodolazkin, Marina Stepnova, and Narine Abgaryan, translated into over thirty languages. Our guiding philosophy revolves around providing a personalized approach for each author, connecting them with the perfect publishers or film production companies worldwide, and crafting unique marketing and promotional strategies for every title.

Our journey in the publishing and film industries has transformed us into a full-service agency, representing authors in publishing, film, television, and theatre.



About the author:

NARINE ABGARYAN was born in 1971 in Berd, Armenia, to a doctor and a school teacher. She graduated from the State University of Linguistic Studies in Yerevan with a diploma as a teacher of Russian language and literature.

Abgaryan is the internationally bestselling author of a dozen books, including her nationally bestselling and prize-winning trilogy about Manunia, a busy and troublesome 11-year-old in the small Armenian town of Berd. The trilogy received the Manuscript of the Year Award in 2010 and the Russian Literature Prize in 2011. Manunia was adapted into a TV series on the Okko platform, premiering at the Kinotavr Film Festival in 2021, and a number of feature films.

Her other children's book, Semyon Andreich, received the Baby-NOS award from The New Literature Award in 2013, recognized as "the best book for children of the last decade."

Abgaryan's powerful and moving parable Three Apples Fell From the Sky has been translated into 30 languages and became a long seller throughout Europe. In 2016, it won the prestigious Yasnaya Polyana Prize.

Since 2022, Narine Abgaryan has lived in Germany.

Selected Bibliography

- 2020 — **Simon**, *novel*
- 2017 — **Go on Living**, *short stories*
- 2016 — **Zulali**, *novel*
- 2015 — **Three Apples Fell from the Sky**, *novel*
- 2014 — **People Who Are Always with Me**, *novel*
- 2012 — **Semyon Andreich. A Story in Scribbles**, *novel*
- 2012 — **Manunia, Gran's Birthday Anniversary and Other Turmoils**, *novel*
- 2011 — **The Migrant**, *novel*
- 2010 — **Manunia Writes a Fantastic Novel**, *novel*
- 2010 — **Manunia**, *novel*

Awards

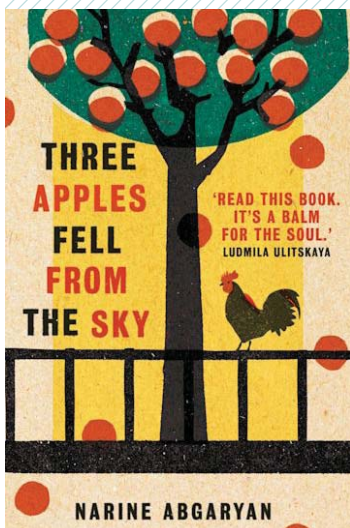
- Shortlisted for the **Big Book Award** 2021
- Yasnaya Polyana Prize** 2016
- Nominated for the **National Bestseller Prize** 2016
- The Alexander Green Award** 2015
- The New Literature Award** 2013 (The Best Book for Children)
- The Russian Literature Prize** 2011
- Longlisted for the **Big Book Award** 2011
- Manuscript of the Year** 2010

Over 1 500 000 copies
sold worldwide

Winner of the **Yasnaya Polyana Prize** 2016

Longlisted for the **National Bestseller Prize** 2016

Over
300 000 copies
sold



Three Apples Fell from the Sky

Marquez's all-time classic epic *One Hundred Years of Solitude* meets Sergei Parajanov's *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* in this unforgettable fable about a small, decaying Armenian village perched atop Mount Manish Kar.

The title of the novel — *Three Apples Fell from the Sky* — refers to a typical ending of Armenian fairy tales: “three apples fell from the sky: an apple for the one who watched, another for the one who told the story, and the third one for the one who listened.” The novel, too, resembles a fable. Its heroes are several families living in a decaying mountain village. The village's only connections with the lowland are an old wire telegraph and a hardly visible road that even cows tread with difficulty. Part weirdoes, part naggers, the village's few remaining inhabitants — a dozen elderly people — share one thing in common: they believe in magic.

Love and pain, vengeance and forgiveness, friendship and feud tensely knot the lives of the villagers together through generations. There's Anatolia, the last of the village's oldest family, having survived a great famine. A rare beauty and a book lover, Anatolia suffered from the ravages of her husband's attacks, who fled the village after nearly beating her to death. There's Vasily, a blacksmith and widower, who lost his three sons and a younger brother in

WWII. The same younger brother saved the village from imminent destruction in a landslide, thanks to a unique foreseeing gift. There's Yasaman, a healer and Anatolia's friend and neighbor, who treats all villagers with self-prepared herb mixtures. There's even a white peacock, whose miraculous appearance in the village during the famine is only explained at the novel's end.

Readers follow the mundane routine of the old people's lives — making baklava, baking cakes, gathering crops, doing house chores — and become familiar with their life stories, weaving into a slow-paced yet fascinating fable of a village facing an imminent ending. When one true miracle changes everything — 58-year-old Anatolia discovers that she is pregnant...

Narine Abgaryan brilliantly captures the oddness of local life, its striking beauty, and an underlying melancholy. With sumptuous visual imagery and a close eye for petty local details, Abgaryan paints a world where a reader wishes to linger long after the story ends.

AST

Novel, 2016
315 pp

Translation rights

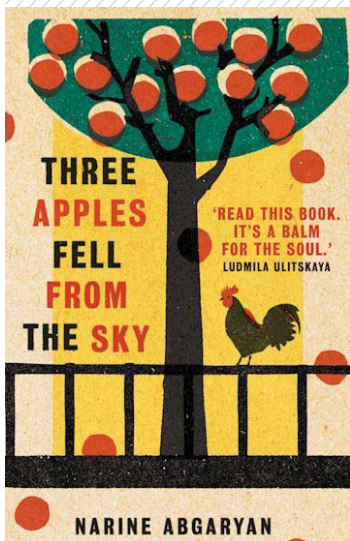
World English Oneworld Publications
German Ullstein
French Macha Publishing
French pocket Univers Poche
German Ullstein List
Italian Einaudi
Estonian Tänapäev
Bulgarian Labirint
Arabic AS Publishers
Armenian Newmag Publishing
Hungarian Typotex
Latvian Janis Roze
Malayalam (India) Green Books
Czech Prostor
Lithuanian Balto
Romanian Humanitas
Slovakian Artforum
Serbian Vulkan
Catalan Comanegra
Macedonian Muza
Simplified Chinese Rentian Ulus Cultural Media
Korean Eulyoo Publishing
Spanish Editorial Navona
Polish Krzysztof Glowinkowski
Croatian Hena
Turkish Hippo / Aras Ya
Portuguese Presenca
Sinhala (China) Subhavi
Thai Library House
Swedish Tranan
Amharic Ethiopia Hohe Publishing

Theater rights sold

Vedogon Theater, Moscow

Complete
English & French
translations
available





Three Apples Fell from the Sky

Selected quotes

A magical realist story of friendship and feuds.

The Guardian

Abgaryan impresses with finely phrased descriptions of daily activities and homes with “chimneys that clung to the hem of the sky,” and indelible details of complex, humble characters. This magical tale transcends familiar mystical tropes with its fresh reimagining of Armenian folklore.

Publishers Weekly

A charming novel... [It] teems with minor characters whose quirks are at times amusing and at times heartbreaking... A warm-hearted story about family, friendship, and community.

Foreword Reviews

Abgaryan's folktale [is] so improbably of the moment... [her] leisurely, painstaking prose — in Hayden's lyrical translation — is an added gift for readers at the moment, because it prompts us to adjust to the “measured pace of existence” that is now also our own.

Asymptote Journal

Suffused with kindness, humour, subtlety and understated finesse.

Eugene Vodolazkin
author of *Laurus*

Read this book. It's balm for the soul.

Ludmila Ulitskaya
author of *The Big Green Tent*

A superb novel... I urge you to read it.

Ma Lecturothèque (France)

Abgaryan's work conveys a deep belief in the resilience of humanity without glossing over the horrors of human conflict.

meduza.io

A poignant, bittersweet, fable-like story... The strongest message that shines through this finely translated novel is that resignation need not lead to cynicism.

Asian Review of Books

I loved this! A tender and quirky tale of stoicism, resilience and love... The ultimate feel-good story of an unlikely romance and the warmth of a community, drawn with humour, empathy and an earthy, magical charm.

Mary Chamberlain
author of *The Hidden*

At the charming heart of *Three Apples Fell from the Sky*, pulses the certain knowledge that “it takes a village” – a village to bleed, to weep, and, finally, to laugh and celebrate as one.

Faith Sullivan

author of *The Cape Ann* and *Goodnight, Mr. Wodehouse*

Abgaryan's descriptions are beautifully written... I couldn't put this book down.

Un Univers de Livres blog (France)

The novel's plot consists of multiple stories of very ordinary but bold and beautiful people, with so much love and humour that cannot fail to go away feeling positive and uplifted.

Russia Beyond

A quiet song of a novel. A novel that opens and lingers... that sweeps over you like a wave on a beach.

The Book Trail

A perfect book for anyone who wants to learn more about Armenia: its customs, its beliefs, traditions and history... A heartfelt, delicate novel.

La Couleur des Mots blog (France)

A novel about ordinary life, written with extraordinary sensitivity and tenderness.

Prestaplume (France)

A magical novel. It manages to be life-affirming without descending into cheap sentimentality... Abgaryan achieves this challenging balance in part through the beauty of the novel's prose, which mimics the oral storytelling of myths and legends.

End of the Word blogspot

To render the richness of Maran's culture, translator Lisa C. Hayden confidently navigates the linguistic complexities of this book... Her translation is visual and sensory... Dramatic and humorous.

The Common

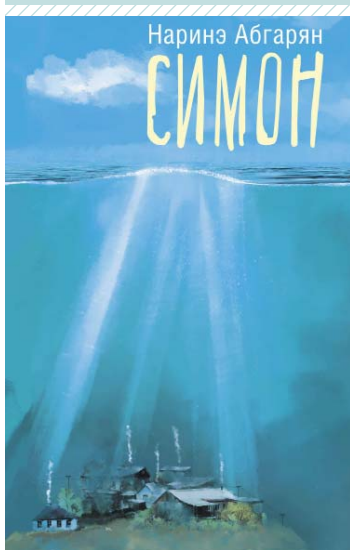
Abgaryan's affectionate portrayal of rural rhythms and unlikely romance is an absolute joy.

New European

30 Great European Books for the Beach



Shortlisted for the **Big Book Award 2021**



Simon

Over
80 000 copies
sold

Narine Abgaryan's *Simon* is a powerful tale of four remarkable women finding themselves, written by an artist working at the height of her power. Just like with her nationally awarded bestseller, *Three Apples Fell from the Sky*, Abgaryan invites readers to the Armenian mountain village of Berd, as she depicts — with unflinching honesty, heartfelt warmth and gentle humor — her female characters' transformation against the twentieth-century social and psychic traumas of Armenia.

AST

Novel, 2020
352 pp

Translation rights

Armenian Antares
Estonian Tänapäev
Italian Brioschi
Bulgarian Labyrinth
Slovakian Artforum
Simplified Chinese Rentian Ulus Cultural Media
Romanian Humanitas
Lithuanian Balto
Catalan Comanegra
Czech Prostor
Malayalam Green Books
Hungarian Typotex Kiadó
Polish Glowbook
Arabic Hayat

Film rights sold

Theater rights sold
Mayakovsky Theater
Sovremennik Theater
Art Master Finland

Adapted to film

Despite its title, Narine Abgaryan's *Simon* centers not on a man but on four remarkable women. Set in the Armenian mountain village of Berd, *Simon* depicts a generation of women coming of age in the late Soviet period. With unflinching honesty and gentle humor, Abgaryan sets her novel against the twentieth-century traumas of the Armenian genocide, civil war, two world wars, and Soviet power — all of which leave their mark on her characters. Many of the women have lost fathers in the Second World War; their mothers exhibit the scars of war, hunger, and backbreaking labor. Bridal abduction, rape stigma, and other social and legal customs that disenfranchise women further complicate their already-difficult lives. But their community has not lost its humanity: a sympathetic doctor protects a psychiatric patient from her vengeful husband, a neighbor slips desperately needed money into a woman's pocket, a mother-in-law sides with a daughter-in-law whose husband is having an affair. The townspeople of Berd — from the softhearted and straitlaced policeman Ilya to the ancient Katinka to the village idiot Vardanush, keeper of everyone's secrets — dispense wisdom and good cheer on matters ranging from swaddling babies to how best to disguise a corpse's blue ears.

The novel begins as guests come to pay their final respects to 79-year-old Simon, known as a hearty drinker and womanizer. Among the mourners are four women with whom Simon has had extramarital affairs. A weak, sensual, but generally kind-hearted man, Simon has crossed paths with all the women at key moments in their lives, offering many of them their first-ever taste of sexual pleasure and desperately needed emotional sustenance. Simon is no saint: his story, which we glimpse in snippets from the tales told by the women, is one of coming to terms with one's own failings. Despite showing early promise as a draftsman, Simon drops out of architectural school and marries the long-suffering Melania, whom he then torments with his carousing

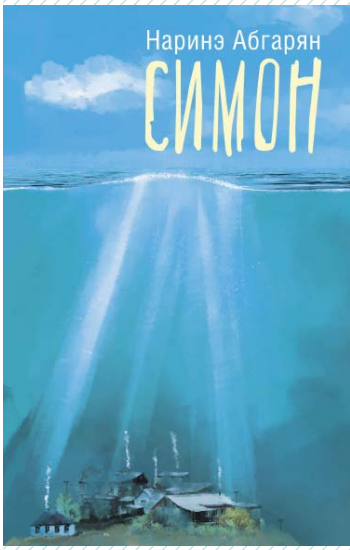
and affairs. At critical moments of his life, he chooses to sulk rather than act decisively, condemning himself and the women who love him to further misery.

After the other guests leave, the four women join Melania in drinking wine and telling their stories, each of which constitutes a chapter in the novel. Suffering from painful, undiagnosed vaginismus, Silvia endures marriage to a well-connected man who assaults and then institutionalizes her, cutting her off from all contact with their infant daughter. Eliza, unwanted by her own mother, marries a man who is besotted by another woman; he despises Eliza, going so far as to tell her that she even smells disgusting. Sofia, a spoiled girl who willfully marries a man against her family's wishes, suffers numerous miscarriages and despairs of ever conceiving a longed-for daughter. Susanna, whose impoverished, dysfunctional family stands out even among the general poverty and dysfunction of the time, is abducted and raped on the eve of her high school graduation, ruining her chances for love and a better life.

Abgaryan's novel is remarkably forthright on subjects traditionally considered taboo in Russophone literature — female sensuality and sexuality, reproductive function (and dysfunction), female body image, and the psychic wounds of war, poverty, and cultural and institutional misogyny.

Despite the brutal nature of some of its subject matter, *Simon* radiates warmth and good nature. Abgaryan is interested not just in women's individual lives, but in the ways those lives swell together to perpetuate life's eternal cycle: birth from water, a mother's voice remembered as the sound of the sea, death as return to the depths of the sea. Disguised as the story of a philanderer who "saves" women, Abgaryan's *Simon* is a powerful tale of women finding themselves, written by an artist working at the height of her power.





Simon

Selected quotes

The narration pulls us into a dense whirlpool of human fates leaving readers no space for a judgement. You cannot even condemn Simon whom the author transforms from a lighthearted womanizer into a person helping his beloved ones in their own transformations, even “resurrections” if you like. In the best traditions of Narine Abgaryan’s prose the tragic and the grim interweaves in the text with the funny and light-hearted moments.

Rossiyskaya gazeta

In the rich and complex ornament of the text there’s place for an Armenian cultural and national identity, hidden family secrets, a late-night chapel singing, and a scent of honey from the lover’s body. Yet there’s no space for any allegations, a condemnation or a judgement of sorts. Thanks to this generous acceptance, Abgaryan’s novel is wise in a sense that

is almost biblical, as it is concocted from stories of people whose hearts beating spins our world.

Anna Delianidi
Literary critic

An outstanding, heartfelt story about love for a human being.

Psychologies

Set in a small old Armenian village, this book is filled with folk lore, intelligence and humor.

sntat.ru

Narine Abgaryan is unsurpassed in her transition from humor to earnestness, from tragedy to a meticulous lyricism.

soyuz.ru



Over 70 000 copies
sold

AST
Novellas, short stories, 2014
280 pp

Translation rights
World English Plough
Bulgarian Labirint
Armenian Newmag Publishing
Hungarian Typotex Kiadó
Romanian Humanitas
Czech Prostor

Complete English
translation
available

Go on Living

Narine Abgaryan's collection of short stories *Go on Living* poses the simplest yet hardest question about how, in the aftermath of terrible tragedy, people learn to live, love and hope anew, while cherishing the memories of the loved ones lost.

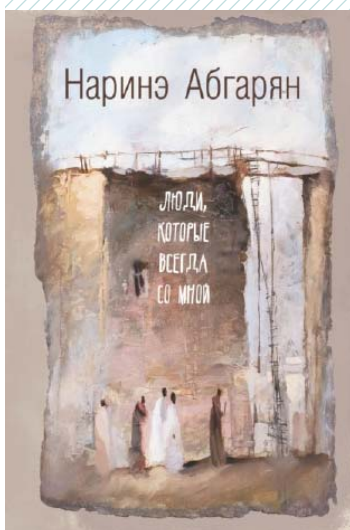
Set in the picturesque village of Berd, the collection traces the interconnected lives of its inhabitants, seemingly unremarkable villagers who go on about their lives, tending to their daily tasks, engaging in their quotidian squabbles, and celebrating small joys amid a luscious, beautiful local landscape. Yet their seemingly unremarkable existence in a setting imbued with a deliberate sense of being suspended in time and space belies an unspeakable tragedy: every character in Abgaryan's stories must contend with the unbearable burden of loss that they have suffered during the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan in the early 1990s.

The war itself rages largely off the book's pages and appears only in small and fragmented flashbacks, and Abgaryan's stories focus instead on the war's aftermath, portraying the different ways in which the survivors work, as individuals and as a community, to find a way forward.

For some, the toll is a psychological one, as the opening vignette introduces the reader to Zanazan, a beautiful young woman who has lost her unborn child, her husband, and her ability to speak to enemy shelling, and who now lives in the care of her elderly mother-

in-law. The middle-aged Metaksia visits her stepson's grave and chats with him as if they were sitting across from each other at a dinner table. Agnessa, whose ill-fated desire to keep her daughter warm in a bomb shelter has cost her not only her own limbs but also the life of her child finds love and a chance at redemption with a new family. Lusine, who barely recalls her mother, abducted and brutally murdered by the enemy, receives, as an engagement present, the last surviving rug woven by her mother. Anichka, whose entire family has been brutally murdered, forges a platonic relationship with a widower whose son has been left incapacitated by yet another act of senseless violence.

The characters in Abgaryan's book have lived through unimaginable loss, but their sadness is described as cathartic, engendering hope where all hope must be lost. The book, set up as 31 interconnected short stories, has no single protagonist; instead, the book is centered around the resilience of the human spirit and its ability to soar above. Written in Abgaryan's signature prose style that weaves elements of Armenian folkloric tradition into its prose, the book simultaneously mourns and celebrates human life.

Nearly 150 000
copies
sold

People Who Are Always with Me

People Who Are Always with Me is the story of several generations of a single family, told through thirteen interconnected novellas from the eyes of a child. It recounts the lives of people who have endured hardships yet managed to preserve kindness, humanity, and love in their hearts.

It is not often that you come across books that give you goosebumps, lulling with a leisurely narration of the simplest things that surround us every day. People Who Are Always with Me is just such a book, giving a positive charge and inspiring faith in the best.

In fact, Narine Abgaryan wrote an autobiography — a story about a little girl surrounded by a large, close-knit family, ready to support her and shield her from adversity, guiding her along the right path.

People Who Are Always with Me is a world seen through the eyes of a child — unclouded by problems and hardships, colorful and bright. This child already knows what life and death are, but perceives them as natural occurrences, understanding how cruel human rumor can be and how easily it can lead to hatred. Yet the girl is in no hurry, because the whole world belongs to her and offers countless roads to explore.

Abgaryan draws touching pictures from childhood: a trip to the mountains, a wedding, admonitions from adults. All these incidents are filtered

through the child's worldview, with conclusions drawn and remembered to be of use in the future.

The narrative sometimes jumps from place to place, returning to continue what was started, but this does not prevent the reader from absorbing the beautiful and warm story of the girl's life. It is perfect to read on a rainy autumn evening, wrapped in a blanket, yet feeling a different warmth — the warmth of Narine Abgaryan's soul, the warmth of a long-gone childhood.

This book is infinitely comfortable, able to heal mental wounds, relax, and soothe. Such works must be read to remember what spiritual beauty is, what the beauty of the world around us is — things we begin to forget in our endless haste and pursuit of shadows.

Pause for a moment and plunge into the world of childhood with People Who Are Always with Me. It is addressed to a wide audience of readers, regardless of age or literary preference.

AST

Novel/Novellas, 2014
280 pp

Translation rights

French Macha Publication
Bulgarian Labirint
Armenian Oracle
Lithuanian Balto
Romanian Humanitas
Macedonian Muza
Slovak Artforum

Theater rights sold

Lumikello Finland

Complete French
translation & English
sample
available

Selected quotes

Abgaryan's warmth in portraying everyday twentieth-century reality, such as it is, in Berd, Armenia, feels like a unique form of writerly magic.

Lizok's Bookshelf

The Alexander Green Award 2015

Longlisted for the Big Book Award 2011

Winner of the Manuscript of the Year 2010

Winner of the Russian Literature Prize 2010



Manunia

Over 400 000 copies
sold

Manunia was the first major work by Narine Abgaryan, named “one of Europe’s most exciting authors” by The Guardian. It is the first book of a prize-winning trilogy that has enjoyed considerable commercial success — selling over 400 000 copies, topping bestseller lists, and — most excitingly — being adapted into a television series and feature films, with an animated series in development.

AST

Novel, 2010

315 pp

Translation rights

Armenian Antares

Bulgarian Labirint

Estonian Tänapäev

Romanian Editura Frontiera

Arabic Thaqafa

Polish Glowbook

Film rights sold

film series Manunia, two seasons

(directed by Arman Marutyan,

produced by Andreasyan brothers, 2021-2022)

a feature film Manunia in the Movies 2022

a feature film Manunia in the Countryside, 2023

a feature film Manunia and the New Year 2024

a feature film Manunia in Moscow 2024

a feature film Manunia: Ba’s Birthday 2025

Theater rights sold

RAMT, Moscow

Theater For Young Viewers, Ufa

Set in the 1980s, Manunia tells the story of two little girls growing up in Soviet Armenia, and the often absurd situations they found themselves in. Manunia is an autobiographical mix of light-hearted anecdotes and heart-breaking lessons retold with compassion, whilst at the same time hinting at the very adult world just on the fringes of the girls’ awareness. Manunia is distinctive for its humour, often derived from arguably controversial themes, such as death and religion, yet handled with artistry and sensitivity by the author. Abgaryan’s writing is revealing: she doesn’t shy away from the grittier aspects of growing up. She writes candidly and irreverently about “that time Manunia and I got head lice,” and “that time Manunia had a crush on the next-door neighbour,” not to mention, “that time we nearly shot our PE teacher with a shotgun.”

Most of the narrative unfolds over the course of one long, sumptuous summer, just as the girls are on the cusp of adolescence. The narrator introduces us to the town of Berd, its history, and the particular traits of its people. We soon meet Ba, the story’s unlikely protagonist: a veritable force of nature. The character of Manunia’s grandmother is a slow burner. Cantankerous at the best of times, with a unique world view and sense of humour, she has a nature one warms to over the course of the narrative. Each chapter sees the girls embroiled in mishap after mishap: whether it is setting Grandma’s bloomers on fire, or playing with the rag-and-bone man’s kids, who are strictly out of bounds. A bout of head lice means the girls have their heads shaved

by Ba, who accidentally dyes their scalps blue with her homemade hair mask — though she’d have you believe it was entirely part of the plan. The girls learn a valuable lesson about life and death when they find a baby bird fallen from its nest. And again when they play at being snipers — complete with a real shotgun. While the focus is on the girls’ antics and shenanigans, Abgaryan deftly uses the negative spaces to show glimpses of life in the Soviet Union.

The plot is set against a backdrop of characters from various cultures: Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Russians, Georgians, Gypsies, and Jews. All from different walks of life. All inextricably intertwined, as was the norm in the Soviet Union. All thrown together by circumstance, rubbing along with surprising harmony. Set in an unfamiliar cultural landscape for a non-Russian reader, Manunia would appeal to a readership seeking a more nuanced insight into growing up in the Soviet Union.

The story is set in Armenia, which adds a unique cultural element to the narrative, distinguishing it from the majority of books translated from Russian. Manunia was marketed as “a children’s book for adults” — an easy read for adult readers. This novel would also be suitable for the young adult market. It is hard to compare Manunia to other books as it feels very contextual. To a certain extent, the colourful characters and distinctive humour are reminiscent of Gerald Durrell’s My Family and Other Animals.

Adapted to film and
TV-series



About the author:

SONA ABGARYAN was born in 1979, in the city Bird, Armenia. 1995-2000 she studied at the Terlemezyan Art College, Armenia, in 2007 — Academy of fine Arts Paris, France. Her specialty is video art, digital and analogue paintings. Her illustrations appeared in the books written by her sister, Narine Abgaryan. Today, Sona Abgaryan participates in different projects and international collaborations, and also works at the Tumo-Center for Creative Technologies.

Selected Exhibitions: Blind Dates, Pratt Manhattan Gallery, NY (2011), Oberhausen film festival, Germany (2009), Adieu Parajanov, Kunsthalle MOMA, Vienna, Austria (2003), Cool Generation — solo exhibition, ACCEA, Yerevan, Armenia (2003), XLIX International Art Biennale of Venice (2001).

The Old Woman and Her Goats is Sona Abgaryan's debut in prose. Originally written in Armenian, it was translated into Russian by Lilit S. Meliksetyan and won The Manuscript of the Year prize in 2022, followed by publication in 2023. Today Sona Abgaryan lives in Yerevan and works on the novel's sequel.

Selected Bibliography

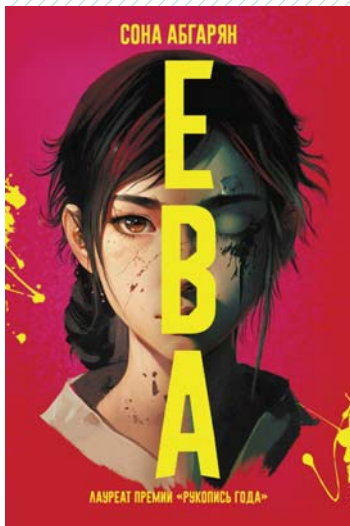
2023 — **The Old Woman and Her Goats (Eva)**, *illustrated novel*

Awards

Winner of the **Manuscript of the Year 2022**

Winner of the Manuscript of the Year 2022

The Old Woman and Her Goats (Eva)



Arevik Publishers
Armenian language
Novel with illustrations, 2025
382 pp

Translation rights
Russian AST

If Kill Bill featured Jeanne d'Arc in a fictional war-torn Armenia of the alternative present. The Old Woman and Her Goats is an extraordinary prose debut from a gifted artist — an action, dark fantasy manga-inspired novel, rooted in the Armenian folk lore as well as the country's dark present.

The novel tells the story of a struggle between the young female warrior Eva with ruthless tyrants, the Gerbers, terrorizing Yerevan with the help of the mutated cannibal hyenas and the police. Thanks to genetic experiments every man in the Gerbers family has a hideous head of a monster in his stomach, literally gobbling up their enemies and opposition. Even three Gerber's daughters suffer from their father's concupiscence and malice — living in luxury, they are still victims of continuous sexual and physical abuse from their father and his henchmen.

The story opens with Eva, 17 years old, waking up in her Granny's house, heavily mutilated and with a severe memory loss. Granny heals her with magic invisible herbs. While on her sick bed, Eva gets a visit from The Umbrella Man, a demon, feeding on sufferings and tears of his victims. The Umbrella Man is drawn to Eva, so rather than killing her he leaves his mark on her neck, as she's beginning to remember. Her memories are truly devastating: a leader of the opposition, she lost to the Gerbers. Both her fellows and rivals believe she died in that battle. The most eerie memory is of Arthur, a homeless boy she once met in the underground and made friends with — Eva thinks Arthur died in that battle, the last she remembers before she passed out is his blood-covered face. Eva is set to find Arthur's whereabouts, and revenge for his death.

Eva seeks a new battle, yet Granny insists that Eva should first regain her powers and sends her to the Lieutenant Colonel, one of the greatest masters of Armenia. Through exhausting exercise and training Eva excels in battle skills (her armory is her hair, she uses braids as sabres), and what's more — revives her persistent battling spirit. The Lieutenant Colonel gets Eva to the master Arutyun — a legendary master who once taught all greatest masters, himself and The Umbrella Man included. The shepherd Arutyun is half man, half woman, and can gift his pupil with a unique magical skill. He should just look you straight in the eye, but this almost never happens, as he fights with his eyes closed. Master Arutyun does not believe Eva can win over the Gerbers, yet in their final training battle she succeeds in surprising the master, and he gives Eva a look. Now Eva is gifted with a unique power — she can control the time flow.

Eva returns to Yerevan and gathers her fellow warriors together. There is Mary, an introvert warrior, fighting with a blue sword, charging her life spirit in battles; Marie, keen on fashion and looks, mastering at a bright pink and deadly electric chain saw; Marat, a young man torn between his feelings for Eva and war ambitions; Ssati's female warriors, from the quarter of prostitutes; Ssati's son, Dev — a strikingly handsome demon turning into a dragon at battles. The detachments of Yezidis and the Molokans will join their forces on Eva's

side. Yet Eva is afraid they won't stand a chance against the Gerber's hyenas and police, by far superior in numbers. Moreover, Eva is torn by doubts about leading people to imminent death, for the sake of gaining freedom. Is any idea worth a human life?

Eva seeks support at her Godmother, a sorceress, and Granny. They give her magic powders: the star dust that can revive any human being but takes the life of another, of its own choice, and the black dust that eases pain at death.

The Gerber daughters leave Eva without a choice — they murder their father in self-defense, in an act of mutiny leading to an even crueler tyrant seizing power. They are thrown to prison to be soon executed, while Doza, Gerber's right hand and advocate, proclaims himself a new ruler. He demonstrates his true nature at the coronation, cynically ordering his hyenas to devour the representatives of the poor quarter attending the ceremony with gifts. Eva has to protect citizens from violence and tyranny, while her fellows show willingness to fight for freedom until their last breath. The battles between stoic heroes and monstrous villains rage in the streets, death toll escalating on both sides, when hyenas suddenly switch sides, choosing Eva over their evil handlers. Finally, Eva's army stands a proper chance.

Doza challenges Eva to single combat that should define the outcome of the war. Doza surpasses Eva in powers, and the word has it that he has a unique power of transformation, though nobody ever saw his other identities. Eva is nearly defeated when she gathers her spirit and uses her magic skill, turning time flow against him, repeatedly reviving, and beating the rival. In response Doza applies his superpower of transformation. Eva has to meet Doza's other identity — it is Arthur, her friend, whom she sought after. Arthur is alive, and he is Doza's childhood. Eva kills Doza but appeals to the star dust to revive Arthur. Now the star dust will take the other life in return, but Eva is not afraid: she has her Granny's black powder, so she can stand the pain of death. But the fate decides otherwise...

Gripping and action-driven, the novel reads as a script of an original anime film, and the author's drawings, opening each chapter, help the readers to immerse into the novel's ingenious world. Fictional and fantastical as the story is, it alludes to the real facts and recent events in Armenia, easily recognizable by anyone familiar with the country's often tragic present. Despite its exotic setting, The Old Woman and Her Goats prompts its readers to contemplate over universal and acute questions. Is any idea worth a human life? And what does it take to break the eternal circle of war and violence?

My sister Sona wrote a book. She wrote it after we had lost in war. While everyone would go mad in their own way, my sister came up with a story about the city which fell but did not surrender. She wrote of people who are stronger than despair. She wrote of life winning over death. Eva is topical for all of us today as it speaks about what we feel right here and right now.

Narine Abgaryan,
the internationally bestselling author of
Three Apples Fell from the Sky





The Old Woman and Her Goats (Eva)





The Old Woman and Her Goats (Eva)





About the author:

LIUBOV BARINOVA was born in a village in Rostov Velikii region in 1972. Barinova graduated from the Moscow State University of Printing Arts of Ivan Fedorov and has worked as a journalist and sales manager in publishing. Her short stories were published in various journals and anthologies. Barinova attended two creative writing courses in Moscow.

Her mentor Marina Stepnova, the acclaimed author of *Women of Lazarus*, highly praised Barinova's debut novel and recommended the manuscript to her literary agents who placed it with Russia's leading literary publisher Elena Shubina. Film rights to the debut novel *Eve* were sold prior to the publication, the book now adapted to a successful TV-series.

Barinova lives in Moscow with her family.

Selected Bibliography

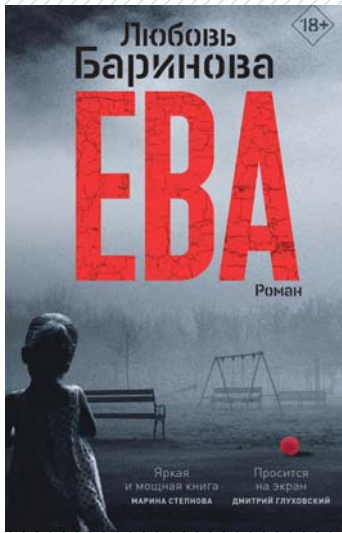
2022 — **Victima**, *novel*

2019 — **Eve**, *novel*

Awards

Longlisted for the **National Bestseller Prize 2020**

Longlisted for the **National Bestseller Prize 2020**



Elena Shubina Publishing (AST)
Novel, 2019
318 pp

Translation rights
Arabic AS Publishers
Hungarian Tericum

Film rights sold prior to publication

English sample
available

Adapted to TV-
series

Eve

Liubov Barinova's riveting debut novel — *Eve*, a psychological drama — struck a chord with the Russian literary community. The manuscript was championed by Barinova's mentor, Marina Stepnova, as well as Dmitry Glukhovsky, the internationally bestselling author of the *Metro* series of novels. *Eve* is a taut novel with the tension of a thriller — it forces the reader to ponder difficult questions: how far can a sibling's love go, and can evil be repaid with another crime?

Herman Morozov is a kidnapper. This is his story. The novel's opening catches Herman Morozov as he is about to pull the trigger. Herman's plan is to shoot the Lomakins, who murdered his sister, Eve. Herman changes his original scheme, though, when he sees the Lomakins' three-year-old daughter: he will kidnap the girl to make the Lomakins suffer just as they made him suffer. It should be simple — he will send them pieces of the girl's clothes and belongings regularly, no explanations, no ransom demands, no hope of seeing their daughter again. An eye for an eye.

Told in alternating perspectives before and after the kidnapping, *Eve* asks unsettling questions about whether one evil deed can be retaliated with another crime.

Following the story of Herman's past, we watch the painful bonding between the siblings: their relationship explains, even excuses, the crime Herman commits. Raised by a stern single father, the siblings develop a strong connection, where a silent boy depends totally on his effervescent sister. Two childhood incidents — a tragic winter walk in the woods that leaves Herman handicapped for years and a heart-wrenching bullying incident at school — make Herman's dependence on his sister psychologically obsessive. The boy literally loses his breath in Eve's absence.

Over the years, Herman learns to control the physical side effects of their bond, though Eve remains the core of his life, the mechanism running his universe. Eve, too, relies on her brother as she walks along a thin path on the darker side. With a life credo of challenging extremes, Eve even writes a suicide note to prevent suspicions being cast on her family in the event of her death. Yet Herman is always there to support his sister whether she's recovering from a new love affair or another job adventure. When Eve marries the headstrong, ambitious Oleg Lomakin, she seems to eventually gain a long-sought peace

along with a bright career. Then one day Eve again calls Herman, who discovers a heartbroken husband upon arrival — Eve has drowned. Supposedly, she has committed suicide. Soon Herman gets evidence that his sister's death was neither a suicide nor an accident.

In the novel's present, Herman struggles with his hatred towards his sister's murderers, holding their daughter as a hostage to his rage. Lost in a crowd of journalists and onlookers, Herman follows as the Lomakins' dream of a family is crushed and the desperate parents plead for their kidnapped baby's return. When the couple pays out a huge ransom to a fake kidnapper, they receive a package with a piece of the girl's clothes from Herman, oblivious to the preceding drama. In despair, Arina's mother poisons her husband and commits suicide. Herman is left with no choice — he must raise Arina as his own daughter.

Over the years, Arina's questions about her mother grow more urgent but remain unanswered. Together with her boyfriend, the girl searches in her father's past. When Arina's investigation brings them to Eve's grave, the girl cannot foresee how the discovered truth about Eve will upend everything she knows about her father and herself.

With exceptional elegance, Barinova makes a surgically detailed psychological examination of her characters and carefully reconstructs their human drama over the length of the novel. The author's eloquent style makes the reading exceptionally enjoyable, immersing readers into Barinova's colorful and vivid universe and into the heart of her ambivalent hero. Barinova demonstrates masterly control over the novel's vivid and totally believable characters, picturesque depictions, and every nuance of the plot's development. The author's razor-sharp descriptions, precise word choice and juicy metaphors ratchet up the novel's tension, making this debut psychological drama truly stand out in the modern literary landscape.

Selected quotes

[Barinova has written] a suspenseful drama with a close eye to psychological details and plot turns. This book explains that life cannot be defined by either a string of incidents or an inherent disposition, but depends instead on what we do and what we choose.

Esquire

A beautiful and overwhelming novel that's impossible to put down.

Marina Stepnova

the prize-awarded author of Women of Lazarus

This novel is totally gripping. It shouts, please, shoot me!

Dmitry Glukhovsky

author of the bestselling Metro series of books

This novel is brilliantly conceived and written. Much looking forward to watch the TV show when it is coming.

Vladislav Tolstov

a literary critic



About the author:

DANIEL BERGER (born 1983) is a film director and producer from Kyrgyzstan. He is the Development Director of the International Documentary Film Festival Artdocfest/Riga and the Executive director of the Artdocfest/Asia Festival. As a film director and producer Berger released a number of short films with a sharp social focus, including *May I Not Die?* (2023), *On a Game* (2022), *Virtual Reality* (2021), *You Are Not Alone* (2021).

Daniel has recently completed a documentary on the consequences of Russia's brutal colonial policy in Central Asia. Produced with the support of Current Time and Radio Liberty, the film tells the story of Kyrgyz natives who lost their lives in the war in Ukraine.

Selected Bibliography

2025 — **Resurrection from the Dead**, *novel*

2025 — **Coffee with Pepper**, *novel*

2023 — **Soviet Demons and Other Beasts**, *novellas and short stories*

Awards

The Russian Prize (second prize) 2024

Nominated for the **Yasnaya Polyana Award** 2023

Nominated for the **Big Book Award** 2023

Nominated for the **Yasnaya Polyana Award 2023**
Nominated for the **Big Book Award 2023**

Soviet Demons and Other Beasts



Elena Shubina Publishing (AST)

Novellas and short stories, 2023
315 pp

Translation rights
All rights available

Audio rights
Vimbo

In Gaiman's American Gods the supernatural creatures are petty, weak, cruel and flawed — in short, they are not different from humans. Daniel Berger, on the contrary, is more optimistic (or less so if you like). The mythological creatures in his universe are alluringly sympathetic and, in a way, more human. This difference gets emphasized when depicted against the backdrop of real historical events.

Yana Vagner
author of the internationally bestselling novel *To the Lake*

Daniel Berger's ingenious debut book of prose offers readers a funny and dark kaleidoscopic journey into myth, covering pivotal moments of the twentieth century throughout the former Soviet Republics.

Daniel Berger inventively and seamlessly weaves together local myths from various regions of the collapsed Soviet empire — from Siberia through the country's South and North, to his native Kyrgyzstan — as he tells stories of pivotal moments in the twentieth century from the perspective of mythical creatures. Along with familiar ghouls, mermaids, forest sprites, and house elves, the stories' inventive bestiary includes creatures endemic to specific regions. We read of Bashkir shulikuns (small demons who plague humans, often with evil tricks), Kyrgyz Albartsy (an evil mountain creature resembling Big Foot), and even an invented ethnic group, the Erlyas and their warlocks, who marry trees in order to give birth to their common offspring.

These mythological creatures are all part of Soviet and post-Soviet reality and are firmly integrated into the daily routines of humans. Some creatures choose not to interact with people, serving as silent witnesses to the flow of time. Others prefer to adapt in society, as they find professional occupations in tune with their natural gifts.

The elderly evil spirit Albartsy works in a regional natural science museum. By day, he's a museum exhibit, pretending to be a Pithecanthropus, but by night, he works as a janitor and a guard, dreaming of a well-deserved pension. When refused by the museum's director, Albartsy hires a pair of elderly cemetery ghouls to threaten the director into granting him a leave and a proper severance package. Meanwhile, the starved ghouls have their own plans for the chubby director (Albartsy).

The story Ene and Soho is set in the Volga region, where Berger places two invented ethnic groups — Erlyas and Shulges. In fine and colorful details, the author depicts their history, cosmogony, traditions, and rituals. What's more, the author coins a language for the Erlyas, based on Hungarian and Chuvash languages. Severpi, a young woman from town and a hereditary Erlya witch, comes to her native village for her grandfather's funeral. As a girl who's become accustomed to city life in the late 1990s, Severpi knows little of her people's beliefs. But when the funeral ceremony goes wrong, she appeals to the village's female elders for help. They remind her of Ene and Soho, the ancient patrons of their kin, and guide the young woman to the adjacent wood, which seems to be rooted into village life in ways Severpi would never have imagined. What begins as a duty turns into a scary but rewarding journey in search

of her true self and a true love (Ene and Soho). Mimosa, a once-immortal Siren, runs a school canteen in a Caucasus village and grieves for her youth, when she reigned together with her sister, enchanting kings, and the bravest warriors, invading new lands and demolishing empires... Until the day her sister bears a son, and their divine powers begin to dissipate (Good Night, Mimosa).

The devilishly attractive demon Strekopytov, a brilliant farm manager and procurer thanks to his irresistible magnetism, suffers from his unrequited love for a young farmer girl (Strekopytov).

A devoted house elf is forced to leave his home together with his "host" family, after being deported to the far north in the early 1930s as part of dekulakization. Thanks to him, the family survives an ice-cold winter at a labor camp. They become the first residents of Soviet settlements in the Sakha region (Khonzia).

Senia, a young shulikun (a small but mighty devil from Bashkir lore), is drafted into the Red Army, and fights along with his kin in Moscow and Siberia, but dreams only of returning home to his native Bashkiria and marrying his beloved. To approach an angel is severely painful for shulikuns, yet Senia pleads to a passing angel to send his love to his girl while he is away. The angel fulfills the request though he knows that Senia will not return home from this war (Shulikuns).

An old forest sprite decides to go against his own rules of not engaging with humans. Fighting the instinct to go into hibernation, the old sprite takes children from their Belarus village, which Nazi troops demolished in their persecutions of partisans, and brings them to a new family. He loses his magic powers when leaving his home forest, but he is prepared to face all hardships of war along with the children, in what will become his last journey (The Forest Children).

Darkly humorous, moving, and often eerie, Berger's book is more than simply a patchwork mythological bestiary from different regions of the former Soviet Union. The intricate blend of myth and reality gives a unique perspective to the historical narrative. In Berger's universe, these mythological creatures change neither history nor human nature. Their magical interactions, though, display the best and the worst in people, ultimately forcing them to look deep into their hearts, often make illuminating discoveries.

Selected quotes

This text is both serious and funny, and sad at the same time, while the representatives of the "evil" or supernatural beings, supposedly dangerous to humans, are in their own way quite endearing and totally humane.

Nezavisimaya Gazeta

These stories of rather hapless transcendent beings are simultaneously funny, somewhat eerie, and yet, in their own way, very touching.

[In describing the supernatural,] the author has found their own unique approach and style. Moreover, from one story to another, it evolves: the allegory gives way to a funny anecdote, and in "The Treasury of Goznak," the narrative style resembles an Eastern fairy tale, which fits the plot just perfectly...

Psychologies

Afisha



About the author:

EVGENIYA (ZHENYA) BERKOVICH is a prize-winning theater director and a poet. She is a member of Kirill Serebrennikov's Seventh Studio and the founder of the independent theater company, SOSO Daughters.

A Russian military court has sentenced her and a playwright Svetlana Petriychuk to six years in prison on charges of "justifying terrorism" in the 2020 play *Finist The Brave Falcon* about women marrying jihadists in Syria. The play had been awarded two prestigious Golden Mask national theatre awards in 2021.

In years following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Berkovich wrote a number of powerful anti-war poems that were published in social media and recited by theater actors and social activists, some of whom are so-called "foreign agents", a state opposition. There are speculations linking Berkovich's arrest and trial with the poems, seeing the play as a pretext for a case and an eventual grave sentence.

Women in Berkovich family have been human rights activists in several generations: her grandmother, Nina Katerli, passed away in 2023, while Berkovich was kept in prison during the case investigation, denied of parole; and so is her mother, Elena Efros.

Through years, Berkovich was active in charity, founding and running a theater festival, *You Are Not Alone*, for children in the orphanages. In 2019, she with her husband adopted two girls, aged 13 and 15, whom she got to know through this charity work.

Zhenya Berkovich wrote her prison tale, *Pets*, for her daughters, but it will definitely travel to a vast adult readership who is open to bold genre and text experiments and wants to support people of art who are in prison and under prosecution. Berkovich wrote *Pets* by hand, sending us notebook sheets, while her friends made copies, deciphered the text, forwarded the printed version back to us and the editor for her notes and questions.

According to Zhenya, writing the story of a cat struggling with odds to re-unite and, ultimately, to free her imprisoned owner, has helped her to survive through these tormenting times. We hope that the fairy tale spirit of the book will unite people in support of Berkovich.

Selected Bibliography

2024 — **Pets**, *novel*

2020 — 2025 — *poetry collections*

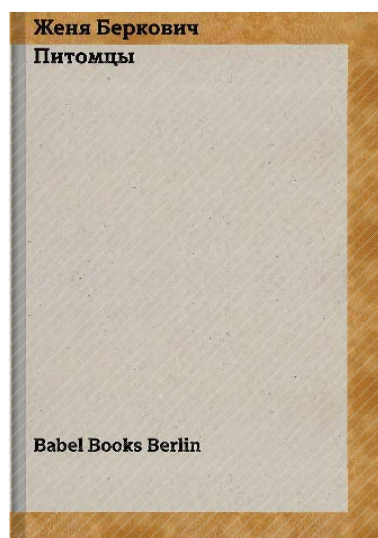
Awards

Anna Politkovskaya Prize 2023

Music Heart of the Theater National Award 2021

Snob Award, nomination Theater 2021

Award-winning theater director and
a poet sentenced to prison



Babel Books Berlin
Novel, 2024
188 pp

Translation rights
Czech Maraton

Theatre rights
Carinthian Summer Festival, Austria

**English and French
samples
available**

PETS

Zhenya Berkovich, a celebrated theater director now serving a six-year prison term following a fabricated, politically charged case, has written a book that upends the tradition of prison writing in Russia. *Pets* is a sharply humorous — and, quite surprisingly, hopeful — tale for adults that depicts prison life from the perspective of its animal inhabitants: mostly cats, but with a whimsical involvement of a (white) crow.

There's Cat, a free stray cat and the leader of the cats' gang — residents of the prison known as Purrrison. As a true gang leader with a strict hierarchy, Cat is cunning, strong and resilient — all qualities vital for survival in the harsh prison environment. Ironically, Cat, a prison cat, treasures his freedom above all, and his pragmatic approach helps him lead the gang, provide for himself and the kittens, and maintain a peace treaty and balanced co-existence with other inhabitants of the prison quarters, including rats and the old lonely dog. This carefully maintained balance works smoothly until the sudden intrusion of a crow named Irky, whose naivety, impulsiveness and impracticality immediately disrupt the prison's established order.

Irky, a young and clueless crow, lands in the prison courtyard, covered in fresh white paint from an unfortunate encounter with a newly painted birch tree. But it is not only the white paint that makes the crow a proper embodiment of a "white crow." Raised by humans in a deli/café, Irky has no experience of survival, but has learned to read and even speak human language. After the café owner passed away, Irky sets out on a journey as an independent bird — until her flight is disrupted by a tree's bulk. Accustomed to pet/owner dynamics, she sees Cat as "her" cat, of which, luckily for her, he remains unaware.

Paradoxically, her abrupt arrival intervenes in a riot plot within the cat gang, as younger and stronger cats

seek to undermine Cat's status as the Cat in Charge. Irky persuades Cat to run a "rescue" operation for a human inmate — for the sake of Shiny, a British domestic cat and another central character. Shiny has been brought to prison in a desperate quest to reunite with her recently arrested and confined owner. With her once-pristine fur, delicate demeanor and surgically removed claws, Shiny would be a justified target for the constantly underfed inhabitants of Purrrison, rats and cats alike. Yet Cat and Irky decide otherwise.

With their own lives and the existence of all animal inhabitants of the prison in mortal danger, the newly bonded friends concoct an intricate plan to reunite the owner and the domestic cat, succeeding — against numerous odds and disruptions — in an impossible mission: to release the human inmate from prison.

Through vivid descriptions, hilarious dialogues, eccentric poetic interludes, and a mix of dark humor and poignant moments, Berkovich paints a complex portrait of life in confinement, where the boundaries between humans and animals blur, and survival depends on friendship and loyalty, but also on luck, wit — and, ultimately, an enduring hope for freedom.

Selected quotes

Pets is a thriller with humor. A phantasmagoria from the lives of animals in prison: cats, crows, rats, and even cockroaches — with witty dialogues, funny verses, and a perfect happy ending. <...> Berkovich masterfully, with a fine sense of rhythm, sprinkles real characters and true details of prison life into this bright, life-affirming reality at the necessary moments. <...> She enriches her daily experiences in prison with hope.

But this is not a self-delusion in the sense of "everything will be fine," but the daring declaration "I will not despair." A witty, free world full of joie de vivre, like something out of dreams and favorite cartoons, she transfers into her prison world — a true testimony of disobedience.

Anna Narinskaya
Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

About the author:

LEONID BERSHIDSKY was born in Moscow in 1971. A journalist since the age of 17, his first job was with the Moscow bureau of the Philadelphia Inquirer, where he helped cover the breakup of the Soviet Union. In 1999, Bershidsky, by then an experienced reporter and editor, became the founding editor-in-chief of the daily Vedomosti, an ambitious media start-up that brought together Financial Times and The Wall Street Journal.

Bershidsky, a graduate of the INSEAD business school in Fontainebleau, France, was the founding editor or publisher of a number of other publications including the Russian and Ukrainian editions of Forbes, as well as the opinion website Republic.ru, now designated by the Putin regime as a "foreign agent."

In 2014, Bershidsky loudly protested the Russian annexation of Crimea. Soon, he and his family were forced to emigrate to Berlin, where Bershidsky went to work as a staff columnist for Bloomberg Opinion.

As the organization's Europe Columnist, Bershidsky covered politics, policy and business in Russia, Ukraine and throughout Europe until the Covid pandemic broke out in 2020. He spent most of 2016 in the United States chronicling Donald Trump's path to the presidency.

Bershidsky continued writing columns through 2023, restating his strongly anti-Putin and pro-Ukrainian position as Russia re-invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

Bershidsky is also an experienced literary translator, having translated notable works, including 1984 by George Orwell and The Trial by Franz Kafka into Russian. Additionally, he has translated a selection of poems by Alexander Pushkin into English, titled A Captive Finch, published by Freedom Letters.

Now, as technical lead of Bloomberg's News Innovation Lab, Bershidsky, a proficient coder, experiments with artificial intelligence applications for the Bloomberg newsroom. A German citizen, he lives with his wife and two daughters in Berlin and in Saxony-Anhalt, part of former East Germany.

*Selected Bibliography*

2024 — **Animal Tested**, *novel*

2013 — **The Craft**, *non-fiction*

2012 — **Faberge's Eight**, *novel*

2011 — **Devilish Trills**, *novel*

2010 — **Rembrandt Must Die**, *novel*

Awards

Shortlisted for **PolitProsvet Award** 2014



Novel, 2024
172 pp, 84 334 words
Originally written in English

Translation rights
All rights available

Original English
manuscript

Animal Tested

In *Animal Tested*, animals — crows, lab rats, and chihuahuas — dramatically disrupt the lives of the novel's human protagonists and, eventually, trigger an avalanche of drastic geopolitical changes. Leonid Bershidsky employs a peculiar lens to explore urgent contemporary dilemmas — power vs. control, empathy vs. tolerance, and the real cost of scientific progress.

In the novel's alternative near future, three seemingly unrelated plotlines intertwine into a tight knot.

In Moscow, a strongman ruler — whom his intimates call Coach and others are instructed not to address directly — faces a growing problem with crows. The priests are the first to be attacked by the aggressive and unusually intelligent birds, but Coach himself appears to be their ultimate target. The ruler's entourage interprets his erratic and violent responses toward the birds as signs of declining mental health — and, more importantly, weakness. An attempted coup d'état finds Coach sequestered in his fortress residence with his disenchanted mistress and their child. They, too, are forced to hide indoors from the aggressive crows.

Coach and his family are placed under home arrest, while the guards undermine his authority by continuously provoking him and his family, trying to make him snap. But to Coach, the only way to escape the nightmare is to join and lead the mystical forces aligned against him — to fly with the crows — and to deliver a message to a loyal general. By the time the coup is defeated, Coach perceives himself simultaneously as man and crow, ready to wage his wars in ways no ordinary human could ever imagine.

In Atlanta, Lex, a young biochemist at a medium-sized pharma company, leads a small team conducting obesity pill research. Lex's unusual emotional intelligence and gentle hands make her the favorite of the lab rats used in the experiments. Eager to make contact with Lex — and no one else — the rats display various near-human behaviors. When she shares her observations with colleagues and her superior, Cheol, she is immediately suspected of burnout and drug use. Undeterred by institutional resistance and unfamiliar scientific terrain, Lex smuggles in forbidden equipment and embarks on a series of experiments with a brain-computer interface to decipher the message the rats

want to communicate. When she finally succeeds, the message reveals unspeakable suffering. Fired when Cheol covets her findings, Lex takes her program to academia and her results to the public, leading a powerful movement driven by compassion not only for animals but for silent victims of all forms of oppression.

In Berlin, Rainer Radtke runs one of several happiness models for EGAL, a think-tank-like organization that has been governing Germany since the political establishment peacefully handed over power to experts in the middle of a pandemic. Rainer's job is to track hundreds of real-time data feeds and suggest policy measures to ensure the population's happiness does not drop below 70%. Rainer himself no longer believes in scientific governance, after a city planning decision led to the demolition of his childhood home and the death of his father. He rebels by running an underground pub in a gloomy village an hour's drive from Berlin and by breeding chihuahuas in defiance of a nationwide dog ban. The chihuahua business unexpectedly brings him into contact with a loose group of anti-expert dissidents and retired politicians bent on returning to power — and badly in need of canine companionship. Rainer helps his new friends sabotage the models to escalate public discontent.

When the three plotlines finally intersect during a series of surreal conference calls between government buildings in Moscow, D.C., and Berlin, it becomes clear that the state of the world is as precarious as rarely before — and that the story does not end here.

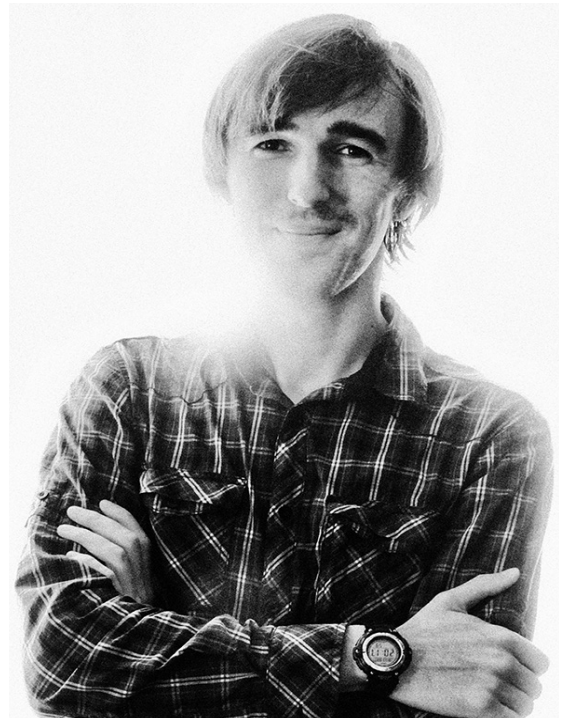
At once a brisk social commentary and a thrilling roller-coaster dystopia, *Animal Tested* showcases a colorful array of vivid characters, surprising readers on every page with smartly concocted plot twists and dramatic psychological transformations. Bershidsky elegantly guides readers as the story probes notions of power, control, intelligence, empathy — and freedom.

About the authors:

ARTHUR BONDAR (1983) is a photographer, publisher and collector. Bondar has been collecting WWII war negatives and prints for many years, and he possesses over 1500 unique war photographs, including the Valery Faminsky archive. Bondar studied documentary photography and human rights at New York University Tisch School of the Arts (New York, USA). Bondar was honored with National Geographic 2011 and Magnum Foundation Human Rights 2012 grants. Bondar was noted with a Photographer of the Year in Ukraine title (2012), and he is also a laureate of the Foundation of Documentary Photography in the USA (2013) and Allard Prize, Canada (2013).

Arthur Bondar has published seven books, including *Signatures of War*, *Valery Faminsky V. 1945*, and *Barricade: The Euromaidan Revolt*.

His projects have been widely exhibited as installations, exhibitions and screenings in museums and art institutions worldwide. Arthur cooperates with many international magazines, newspapers and online media. His works have been published in *The Time*, *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *The Guardian* (including his photograph of President Zelenskyy on the front page), *Le Monde*, *the Times of London*, *the Wall Street Journal*, *De Volkskrant*, etc. The author's website: <https://arthurbondar.com>



KSENIA BUKSHA (1983) was a St. Petersburg-based poet and writer until she left Russia with her four children in March 2022. Buksha is the author of 15 books of poetry and fiction, including the National Bestseller Prize-winning novel *The Freedom Factory*, translated into English by Anne O. Fisher (Deep Vellum/Phoneme Media, 2018). Buksha was the youngest woman ever to win. To date, she is the youngest writer ever to have been shortlisted for Russia's Big Book prize, and one of only two writers — and the only woman — ever to be shortlisted for the Big Book twice before the age of 40.

Buksha is also an artist whose work often appears in the pages and on the covers of her own books. Other literary awards include Citta di Penne-Mosca Prize 2014 (Italy), the Big Book award shortlist (2014 for *The Freedom Factory* and 2020 for *Churov and Churbanov*), and the NOS shortlist in 2019 for *Opens Inward*. Ksenia Buksha's literary fiction, excluding *There's Nobody Up There*, is handled by Elkost Literary Agency.



About Klaudberri, the publisher:

KLAUDBERRI, a small independent press based in St. Petersburg, have gained their distinction with high quality unique editions on art and photography. Their prize-winning and acclaimed books include *HOME* (a selection of short stories by prominent Russian authors, a non-profit project run in partnership with *Nochlezhka* — Night Shelter — to help homeless) and Robert Capa's war memoir *Slightly Out of Focus*. *There's Nobody Up There* was crowdfunded in fall of 2021 and publication was planned for the end of February 2022, but the Russian invasion of Ukraine has made it difficult for Klaudberri to proceed with the publication. It's notable that in April, the book was longlisted for the 2022 Big Book Prize, but the prize announcement refers to the book simply as "a manuscript of an unnamed author."

**Klaudberri**

Ksenia Buksha — text

photographs from Arthur Bondar's private collection
350 pp (33 short stories)

100 documentary photographs

 English sample
available

There's Nobody Up There

An internationally acclaimed Ukrainian photographer and collector and a nationally awarded Russian writer unite for the sake of this unique book on World War II, successfully coining a new language for war discourse. *There's Nobody Up There*, a monumental anti-war collection of short stories and photographic images from WWII, reflects the bitter, sore actuality of today.

The idea of this project comes from documentary photographs of World War II, collected by Arthur Bondar. Bondar has been collecting unknown war photographs for years, and today possesses a unique archive of over 15,000 negatives. The selection of over one hundred photographic images of war comprises the visual context of this edition. These images are not illustrations to the text, they are their own visual documentary narrative, working in tandem with the text to create an immersive, eye-witness effect. In these photographs German, American, and Soviet soldiers are caught in action and at rest between battles drinking vodka and schnapps or posing with bombs and automatic guns; horrifying images of ruined Russian and Belarusian villages intersect with images of besieged Leningrad, bombed-out Dresden, collapsed bridges and roads in havoc. And people, of course, looking at readers from these old black and white photos: Jewish families, Russian and Belarusian partisans, soldiers and pilots of all nationalities across the frontlines, villagers and citizens, children and the elderly, wounded and alive.

Ksenia Buksha has written 33 short pieces of historical fiction, based on thorough research in WWII archives. The characters and their stories are fictional, but Buksha was inspired by real facts, newspapers, diaries and correspondence of the Soviet, German, American, British, Polish, and other participants and eyewitnesses of the war. There's a British pilot back at home after the war — and Dresden bombing — with PTSD (A Burning Crossword Puzzle). There's Osya Zilber, a young Jewish man in a village in Belarus taken over by the Germans; he is suspected by Belarus partisans so has to join a special unit of Jewish partisans after he flees from imminent persecution as German troops enter his home village (Avengers). There's a girl serving in the territory defense unit in Leningrad who accidentally flies off with an aerostat

over the besieged city (The Aerostats). A Roma boy teaches his Russian comrade the most important war lesson — to stay human (What War Teaches). There's a German family saving two Soviet war prisoners who escaped from a concentration camp (A Stupid Dog). A Russian German woman sacrificing herself but killing several German soldiers by suicide bomb (I Am German). A Jewish doctor saving a neighbor boy from his father who has turned mad from starvation in Leningrad during the siege (A Neighbor). A Polish girl singing in the streets of Warsaw, secretly mocking German occupants (A Little Eve, Warsaw Riot). We follow Martin and Lt Dieter Knabe, a German soldier and a pilot, through their transformation while the war takes them deeper in Russia (Into the Dark Hole, No Church Ceremony, Christmas, Martin Does Not Sleep). The war brings these people together, their fates intertwined into an uncuttable knot. Their vivid and authentic stories raise a grand choir in a dramatic anti-war hymn.

There's Nobody Up There is a powerful, authentic interplay of fiction and visual narrative. It offers a key to speaking about war in a direct and frank manner, the only manner that's possible today, when the battlefields in Ukraine burn from real bomb shelling.

There's Nobody Up There was crowdfunded in fall of 2021 and publication was planned for the end of February 2022, but the Russian invasion of Ukraine has put the publication of this anti-war book in Russia in question. It's notable that in April, the book was long-listed for the 2022 Big Book Prize, but the prize announcement refers to the book simply as "a manuscript of an unnamed author."





There's Nobody Up There



sudden, he wasn't afraid. Because what he was doing right now had meaning.

"Look there! He's coming back! And he dragged his buddy back with him!" said the men in the trenches, amazed. "It's a miracle. Come on, boys, cover them!"

Mitya crawled the remaining few dozen meters under covering fire. And then into the trench. They were saved!

Oh, right—that's another thing war taught Mitya: to stay human. Even when it's almost impossible.





About the author:

DENIS BUSHLATOV is a Ukrainian horror writer and screenwriter. His published work includes four novels and two collections of short stories. Several of his stories have appeared in English translation in *Bewildering Stories* and *Kzine* in the UK. In 2021, his short story *The Disintegrator* was included in *Hex-Periments: A Dark Biotech Anthology*, edited by Keith Anthony Baird. *One Who Does Not Sleep* was launched as a successful audio series by Storytel Original, the first horror audio series in their catalogue. Film rights to *One Who Does Not Sleep* have been optioned twice – and are now available.

In addition to fiction, Bushlatov works as an interviewer and journalist, with a focus on horror. He is also commissioned to write English-language film scripts in the thriller and horror genres.

Denis Bushlatov lives in Odessa, Ukraine.

Selected Bibliography

2021 — **Beside Tranquil Waters**, *novel*

2021 — **The Disintegrator**, *short story*

2020 — **One Who Does Not Sleep**, *novel*

2020 — **The Captain**, *biography, non-fiction*

2017 — **Dead Dragon's Children**, *novel*

2016 — **Keeper of the Abyss**, *novel*

2013 — **A Gift**, *short story collection*

2009 — **Devolution**, *short story collection*

Master of horror

**Palmira**

Novel, 2020

403 pp

Audio rights

Storytel Originals

Full
English translation
available

One Who Does Not Sleep

Treading in the footsteps of William Peter Blatty's *Legion*, *One Who Does Not Sleep* is a mesmerizing and terrifying tale of serial killings linked to an ancient evil cult devoted to a demon of graveyards and decay in a sea-side town.

A small seaside town is shattered by a series of inexplicable, gruesome murders. Children are found dead, having disappeared from their parents' hold in full view, often in public. All the bodies bear the same wound — a tiny hole in the ear, inflicted by a sharp object.

Olga, a local psychotherapist specializing in obsessive syndromes, is approached by her school friend (and onetime teenage flame) Andrei, a police officer in charge of the investigation. Andrei asks Olga to compile a psychological profile of the serial killer and to search for possible matches among her patients, as the town is small and Olga is one of the very few practicing specialists.

The more Olga learns about the sinister case, the more clues point to a particular patient of hers, Vadim, a smart but spoiled student from a well-to-do family. Vadim is obsessed with violence, runs a YouTube channel documenting eerie tortures of stray animals, and seems oddly informed about confidential details of the murders. Considering the severity of the case and her strong suspicions, Olga reports her client to the police.

During the arrest, Vadim is shot by officers who later give a perplexing and hallucinatory account of the events.

As Olga continues her investigation, she consults with her skeptical boyfriend, who refers her to another odd character — apparently the town's criminal authority — who links the series of murders to an ancient cult of the local evil demon Sabnach, the demon of graveyards and decay. He reassures Olga that no serial killer could operate in the town, while local historical archives furnish her with proof of similar recurrent cases over the years.

Andrei is forced to close the case by the town's shadowy moguls — he is rewarded for solving it and eliminating the supposed killer, the psychic teenager Vadim. However, Andrei feels dissatisfied. Like Olga, he suspects there is more to the case than a sick teenager's rage. His attempts to continue the investigation ultimately lead to his suspension.

Olga begins to experience strange hallucinations and terrifying dreams, and is forced to return to the case. A chilling realization dawns on her — there is in fact someone else connected to all these murders, someone who knew the families of the victims and could have been at the crime scenes: herself.

Eerie and gripping, this horror whodunit will linger with you long after you finish the book. It introduces a true master of the genre and an original voice for all fans of Stephen King and William Peter Blatty.



About the author:

SVETA DOROSHEVA was born and raised in Ukraine and is currently based in Israel. She works in the areas of narrative art and illustration, with a deep fascination for myth and fairytales that finds its way into her detailed works.

A self-taught artist, Sveta has primarily focused on book illustrations and art for magazines and brands. Her first author-illustrator book, *The Nenuphar Book*, was published in Russia in 2015 and nominated for the National Bestseller Prize. It has been translated into multiple languages, including Romanian, Japanese, Simplified and Traditional Chinese, Arabic, Czech, and English, and has continued to reach new markets since 2019. Her second book, *How to Handle a Child*, was published in 2016 in Russia and is following a similar path. All of her books are personal art projects.

Sveta has been shortlisted three times for the World Best Illustrations (AOI). Her works are featured in leading compendiums of modern illustration, and in summer 2018 she was selected for a prestigious three-month artist residency at the Art Peace Swatch Hotel in Shanghai. This residency resulted in another book, *Shanghai Chronicles: An Artist's Journey*, published in Russia in 2022.

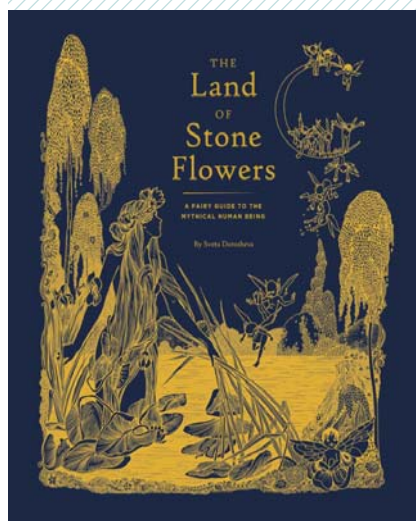
Sveta creates hand-drawn art on paper, merging mythical and traditional motifs from various cultures with her own contemporary ideas. In much of her work, the past is juxtaposed with the present. She draws inspiration from art history, the local mix of cultures, and the contradictions of human nature.

Selected Bibliography

- 2022 — **Shanghai Chronicles: an Artist's Journey**, *illustrated fiction*
2016 — **How to Handle a Child**, *a collection of stories with illustrations*
2015 — **The Nenuphar Book (The Land of Stone Flowers)**, *graphic novel*
2006 — **Mummy Hurries Home**, *graphic novel*

Awards

- Nominated for the **Big Book Award** 2023
Honorary Mention Award at **Global Illustration Award** 2017
Shortlisted for **AOI World Illustration Awards** 2017, 2018
Hiii Illustration Award 2016
Nominated for the **National Bestseller Prize** 2015

**Azbooka**

Graphic novel, 2015

216 pp

Translation rights

World English Chronicle Books

Romanian Baroque Books

Japanese Maar-sha Publishing

Simplified Chinese Hunan Literature and Art

Arabic Egyptian Office For Publishing & Dit.

Albanian Fan Noli

Serbian Dereta

Complex Chinese (Taiwan) Azoth Books

Czech Omega

Complete
English translation
available

The Land of Stone Flowers (The Nenuphar Book)

The Land of Stone Flowers is a book about people, written by fairies, dwarfs, elves, and other fairy-tale creatures. It was discovered in a water lily under mysterious circumstances — hence the name. The entire book is a collection of evidence by fairy creatures proving that people exist. Bursting with intricate and evocative illustrations, The Land of Stone Flowers creates a world of fantasy and fable that slyly reveals many hidden truths about human existence.

The Land of Stone Flowers is a book about people and the human world, as seen through the eyes of fairy-tale creatures. These creatures generally do not believe in humans, but some have traveled to our world in various mysterious ways. Such travelers collected evidence and observations about people, which are recorded in this book. It is an assortment of drawings, letters, stories, diaries, and other materials about humans, written and illustrated by fairies, elves, dwarfs, and other fantastical personalities. These observations may be perplexing, funny, or even absurd, but they all present a surprised and curious look at the things that we, humans, take for granted.

Each chapter is written by a different creature — elf, fairy, dwarf, ogre, giant, witch, and more. Topics include human anatomy, types and origins of people, magical human objects and dwellings,

language, beliefs, rituals, work, music, dance, and much more. Some observations are odd, some wildly inaccurate, and some plain hilarious, but together they weave a playful, tongue-in-cheek picture of a world so incredibly strange to an outsider that it is no wonder fairy creatures struggle to believe in it.

“This is a series of book illustrations presenting the attempt of fairy-tale creatures (who don’t believe in people) to understand what humans are, based on testimonials from humans themselves (quotes by famous people on the nature of man). The resulting impression is rather perplexing.” With her imaginative illustrations, Sveta Dorosheva blends philosophy and literature, creating a unique fictional narrative in the form of a fairy tale, while simultaneously revealing many truths about human nature.

Selected quotes

After reading Nenuphar Book, you’ll come away with a new appreciation for the magical world, for your own world, and for your place in it. And you’ll learn to laugh a bit more at yourself and those around you. You may even start believing in magic. Magic that is invented in our minds and made real by our words and our pens. Magic that adds life to the human experience. Magic that touches even people like me who are strongly rooted in logic and objective truth... In the end, all I can say is, “Wow! This book is a masterpiece.”

GeekDad/GeekMom

Ukraine-born artist Sveta Dorosheva has been dedicated to creating some of the most beautiful book illustrations I have ever laid eyes on... <...> The Nenuphar Book, one of Dorosheva’s many graphic jewels, is a book about a world in reverse, where humans are Todorov’s so-called paper beings, while fairytale creatures shiver under their blankets in fear of our mysterious ways. Starting as a completely different project, that is a catalogue of fairies, it came to be an entire chronicle on humans as seen by fairy-tale creatures. The book looks inquisitively at the abstract mechanisms of love and hate and money, our daily habits and their rationale, if any, and our origins. The lacunae are of course

filled with fantasy — since seen from afar, humans seem powerful beyond measure and their lives unknowable.

Andreea Saioc
The Global Panorama

Sveta Dorosheva’s fantastical art could be compared to a brilliant dream collaboration among noted artists, for whom the goal is a visionary book of enchanted tales. Imagine an artistic hybrid comprised of the intricately-lined illustrations of Harry Clarke or Aubrey Beardsley, the luxurious art deco magnificence of Romain de Tiroff (Erté) fashion plates, and the beautiful-on-the-verge-of-grotesque visages drawn by the enigmatic Alastair. But! In this imaginary scenario, the artists realize there is something... some je ne sais quois... missing from their efforts. They entice illustrator Sveta Dorosheva to join their endeavors: she flits in, and with a mischievous smile and a gleam of amusement in her eye, announces “yes, yes, this is all very beautiful... but let’s make it FUN!”

Coilhouse

Her illustrations take me back to childhood being in love with fairytales and knowing there was infinite possibility for imagination in the world ahead.

Cupcake Punk





**Azbooka**

A collection of stories with illustrations, 2016
48 pp

Translation rights

Romanian Baroque Books
Mongolian Nepko

English sample
available

How to Handle a Child

How to Handle a Child is mock “how to” book on parenthood (think Edward Gorey’s *The Recently Deflowered Girl: The Right Thing to Say on Every Dubious Occasion*). The book embraces the most arguable questions of parenthood, never really yielding a single sober advice.

The underpinning is — people shouldn’t be taught how to handle their kids. They should be soothed that parenthood is a most perplexing task in the universe, and so, whatever they are doing, they are doing a great job. Mistakes and failures are inevitable, joys and rewards sporadic, but with a little bit of humor and philosophy, the whole parenting business is a priceless fuel for observing life itself.

All the episodes in the book are based on true stories and conversations with my kids — Adam (aged three), Liran (aged six), and Alex (aged eleven). Each of the 22 episodes starts out with a maxim uttered by a child, be it the “AAAAAAA” of the newborn or a teenager’s verdict on life. The rest of the story elaborates on this “prophecy,” trying to deduct wisdom, lesson or principle, in the manner of a parable. The resulting stories are full of subtle humor, truth and are instantly recognizable and appealing to anyone who has dared to tread the unpredictable, full of trial, error and humility path of parenthood.

Each episode is illustrated with a scene from the author’s own childhood, loosely related to the topic of the text. The illustrations balance between the “child’s eyesight perception” (magic, unreal, enchanted, yet taken for granted as solid fact of life — just as kids do) and brutal truth (things that did actually take place and were actually the way they are depicted in the illustration). The truth is — the reality is way wilder than any fiction.

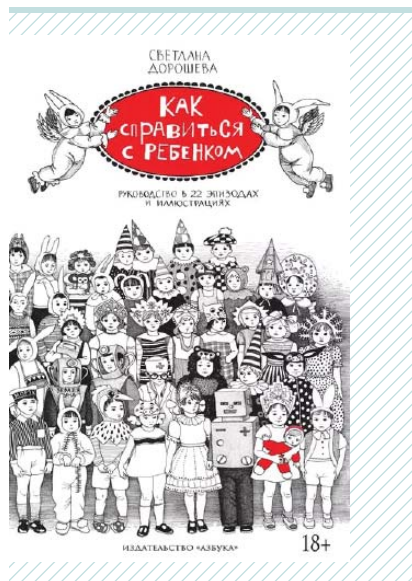
The illustrations address adult readers. After all, no matter how dramatically different their childhood was from that of their kids, the core things that make childhood what it is are intact — the freshness of perception, the agony of growing up, the mischief, and the absence of borderline between the real and the unreal.

Contents:

- How to have a child
- How to birth a child
- How to use a newborn child
- How to name your child
- Where to put the child you’ve birthed
- How to understand what a child is for
- How to wash a child
- How to understand what your child wants from you
- How to make your child sleep
- How to cure your child of illness
- How to make your child speak properly
- How to make your child be quiet
- How to understand what your child is doing
- How to survive your child’s temper tantrum
- How to deal to your child’s mischief
- How to make your child good
- What to do if your child isn’t as good as you’d hoped
- How and what to teach your child
- How to play with your child
- How to punish your child
- How to lie to your child
- How to fix the upbringing you gave to your child



How to Handle a Child



Nominated for the **Big Book Award 2023**



Livebook
Illustrated auto-fiction, 2022
480 pp

English sample
available

Shanghai Chronicles: an Artist's Journey

A commercial illustrator in her forties leaves her family and routine for an adventure in Shanghai — three summer months in a glamorous artist residency, chock full of contemporary artists from around the world — in pursuit of her childhood dream to be a Real Artist.

In Shanghai, she grapples with two new realities, not one: that of the flamboyant, unimaginable Shanghai, and the extravagant, impenetrable world of contemporary art. Essentially, she is into two journeys. One — the usual story: mingling with the in-crowd, going places, and trying to make it in the free art world. And the other — an invisible shamanic journey to the underworld, where the actual people she meets are spirits that lead her through the desert one has to cross whenever one sheds one personality to grow a new one. She needs to do that because her dream of becoming a Real Artist gradually dies on her throughout the journey.

In the “visible” story she basically fails. Her whole Real Artist endeavor is a comic disaster. However, what she's really doing, without realizing it, is the “invisible” journey in search of meaning — of art, of an artist's place in the modern world, and of self.

Selected quotes

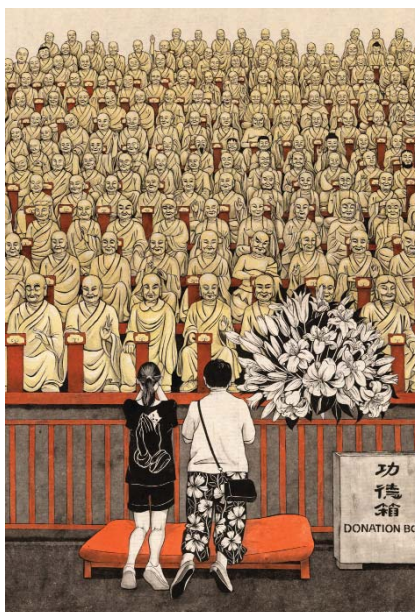
A fascinating journey into a crazy world of contemporary art and through the looking glass of China. Once open, this book will not be laid down.

Tatyana Tolstaya
a writer





Shanghai Chronicles: an Artist's Journey



About the author:

LENA ELTANG was born in 1964 in Leningrad. In 1988, she left the USSR and lived in Paris, London, and Copenhagen. She has been residing in Lithuania since 1991. A journalist and translator, she also became known as a poet after the publication of two collections of poems in 2003 and 2004, and as a short-prose writer when her works were included in the *Five Names* anthology. *Blackberry Shoot*, Lena's first novel, created a stir on the Russian literary scene, became a finalist for the National Bestseller Prize and the Andrei Bely Prize, and was hailed by literary critics as "the best Russian novel in years." Since then, Lena Eltang published several novels that won her numerous prestigious literary awards. Lena completed her latest novel, *Radin*, in August 2021.

*Selected Bibliography*

2022 – **Radin**, *novel*

2014 – **Cartagena**, *novel*

2011 – **The Other Drums**, *novel*

2008 – **The Stone Maples**, *novel*

2006 – **Blackberry Shoot**, *novel*

Awards

Longlisted for the **Big Book Award** 2022

Longlisted for the **Yasnaya Polyana Prize** 2022

Shortlisted for the **Big Book Award** 2012

Finalist of the **Russian Literary Prize** 2011

Winner of the **New Literature Award** 2009

Shortlisted for the **National Bestseller Prize** 2006

Finalist of **Andrei Bely Prize** 2006



Ripol
Novel, 2014
Alpina NF Prose
Novel, 2023
424 pp

Translation rights
Albanian Fan Noli
Arabic AS Publishers
Armenian Oracle
Latvian Agdads Mansards
Bulgarian Labyrinth
Slovenian Mladinska Knjiga

**Complete English
translation
available**

Cartagena

The Gardener Is Gone

Mystery thriller

From the prize-winning author of Blackberry Shoot and The Stone Maples, comes a mesmerizing tale of unwanted love, unperformed vengeance and myths coming alive.

The story unfolds on the rocky coast of northern Italy, set in the beautiful Briatico Hotel — a snow-white manor turned private nursing pension.

Petra, a law student, arrives at Briatico from Rome as a nurse, determined to investigate the ruthless murder of her brother. The local police inspector is inclined to attribute the crime to a trivial dispute among village youths, but Petra knows the killer is one of the hotel staff. She is not the only one at Briatico hiding behind a false identity.

An Englishman playing piano in the hotel lounge lies not only about his occupation but also about his nationality. A writer, who has lost his ability to write or sustain a proper relationship, searches for traces of a lost love. His girlfriend mysteriously disappeared years ago on the manor's premises, leaving behind a blazing chapel and a heartbroken Marcus, who has never recovered from what he sees as a betrayal.

A hotel guest claiming to be a captain sports a false beard and boasts of countless fabricated sea adventures. An heir, deprived of the manor, seeks compensation for what belongs to them by birthright.

Finally, there is a killer who transforms part of the story into a comedy of errors and part into a blood-curdling crime drama, all set against the strikingly beautiful backdrop of Briatico, creating an antique tragedy.

Torn by passions and haunted by murky secrets of the past, these characters are drawn to Briatico by fate's invisible threads, seeking vengeance and truths they hope to believe. Eltang brilliantly weaves an intricate web of dramatic turns and shocking riddles, tossing ever-elusive evidence, upturning facts, and following her characters through the labyrinth of the text with agile curiosity and genuine sympathy.

Told in Eltang's trademark poetic diction, with immaculate pitch, unexpected plot twists, and a unique delicacy in literary allusions, Cartagena is more than a spectacular literary achievement — it is a much-awaited sensation of the year. This engrossing human drama will make readers shed tears, flee from temptations, solve riddles, and tremble with sympathy, dread, and love for its characters.

Winner of the **New Literature Award** 2009



AST

Novel, 2008

414 pp

Translation rights

Latvian Janis Roze

Lithuanian Vaga

**English sample
available**

The Stone Maples

A stunning family drama, told with the precision of Nabokov and the hypnotic intensity of Joyce.

Red-haired Sasha Saunley runs a Bed and Breakfast called The Stone Maples in the tiny, remote village of Wishguard, somewhere on the moors of Wales. Not only is she considered strange, she is also rumored to be a witch. Such a rumor is not entirely groundless, as she has refused to speak since the next-door teenagers killed her dogs, Hugin and Munin. All the more so, The Stone Maples long ago became a substitute for her five-o'clock meetings with the second cousins of her late father. Sasha's younger stepsister, Edna, disappears under obscure circumstances — while in the courtyard, a hummock appears with an epitaph for the «Younger One».

The possible crime of the Welsh witch becomes the pretext for a bet, and Llewellyn, a Londoner, arrives at The Stone Maples to investigate what is purported to be a murder. Sasha's journal falls into his hands — the passionate, poetic, and witty confession of an enigmatic woman. Her love-hate relationship with her younger stepsister, knotty affairs with the locals, envy and betrayal, fantasies, myth, and

legend — all this enchants Llewellyn. When he is about to admit his loss of the bet, he discovers another of Sasha's journals, containing completely different entries. Why does she need two journals, and, more important, which of them is truth and which is fiction?

Told through the journals and letters of Sasha, her stepmother, her younger stepsister Edna Alexandrina, Llewellyn, and Tabitha, the London girl in love with him, this entrancing family drama reveals one shocking mystery after another. The most significant puzzle is broached at the very end.

The Stone Maples is a breathtakingly deep and atmospheric novel inhabited by lovable and vivid characters. Masterly use of cultural layers, the delicacy of literary allusion reminiscent of Joyce and Nabokov, and an eerily prophetic gaze at reality — these are the trademarks of Lena Eltang, one of the most unique authors writing in Russian today.

Shortlisted for the **Big Book Literary Award 2012**Finalist of the **Russian Literary Prize 2011****Eksmo**

Novel, 2011

640 pp

Translation rights

All rights available

English sample
available

The Other Drums

In *The Other Drums*, Lena Eltang's brilliant third novel, the national prize-winning author completes the theme of escape and freedom in a work that has prompted comparisons to such classics as *De Profundis* and *Invitation to a Beheading*.

The novel begins with the arrest of 34-year-old Kostas Kairis, a Lithuanian citizen, in his house in Lisbon, Portugal. Kostas is not the original owner of the house; his step-aunt Zoe inherited the ancient mansion after the suicide of her husband, a scion of a noble Portuguese family. Zoe included Kostas in her will at the last moment, just a few days before her early death from cancer at the age of 44, leaving virtually nothing to her own daughter. The aunt's will burdens Kostas with mortgage payments to the bank and prohibits him from reselling the property.

An idle intellectual, Kostas pays the bills by selling the Braga family furniture and jewelry and subletting the house to shadowy business operations. First, his childhood friend Ljutas installs cameras in the mansion to shoot porn movies. The built-in surveillance appliances come in handy for blackmailing Kostas' chance lover, who offers a share of her husband's settlement if they catch him with his pants down on a set-up date with a call girl. Kostas watches in awe as the date unravels and a stranger shoots the prostitute with the Braga family gun. The blackmailers turn the evidence of the dead body against Kostas, and when the police arrest him several weeks later on murder charges, he feels relieved — he will not hesitate to reveal the identities of the real murderers.

His experience in jail is a rude awakening for Kostas. He is held in solitary confinement as a murderer; interrogations and meetings with a lawyer are only occasional, and the guards often forget to bring him his meals. Yet he is allowed to use his laptop — a real treasure for an undereducated historian turned writer. Kostas begins by writing a letter to his Estonian wife, from whom he separated over fifteen years earlier. What begins as an explanatory letter grows during nine weeks of imprisonment into powerful confessional prose, permeated with guilt, melancholy, and fear of loss.

As Kostas speaks of people he once knew, loved, hated, befriended, betrayed, dreamt of, and never came to understand, the reader of Kostas' "diary" becomes a spectator of a street puppet show, in which the director — with a wave of his wand or the sound of the other drums — exchanges roles with the cast. The tension and passion grow with every page, until one day Kostas begins to suspect that the door to his cell is not real either, throws it open — and walks out.

In her immaculate poetic diction and with profound encyclopedic knowledge, Lena Eltang creates a unique mosaic of a novel about guilt and memory, one that makes us all its voluntary prisoners.

Shortlisted for the **National Bestseller Prize 2006**

Finalist of **Andrei Bely Award 2006**



Amphora

Novel, 2006
396 pp

Translation rights
All rights available

Blackberry Shoot

Umberto Eco meets Dostoyevsky in this spellbinding debut novel, unanimously hailed by critics as “the best Russian novel in recent years.”

British historian Theo Forge finds a letter written by a monk in the 15th century. The letter tells the story of some artifacts so threatening to the Vatican that the monk was sent to Malta to hide and guard them. Forge assumes the artifacts represent six of the alchemic elements and becomes obsessed with the idea of finding the treasures.

The group of six people setting out to Malta is picturesque: Forge himself; his fiancée Nadia, a London lawyer; red-haired archaeologist Fiona; a Macedonian graduate student, Fiona's lover; French antiquarian Eugene Levas; and an Austrian doctor, York. Each harbors a secret from the past that sparks the decision to embark on this nearly absurd journey. The adventure of the cryptologists turns into a thriller as members of the quest begin to die, one by one.

The escalating Maltese drama is witnessed not only by the police but also by a young man of heavenly beauty and encyclopedic erudition — Moras.

He suffers from an unnamed mental illness sometimes interpreted as permanent genius. Moras, a Lithuanian language student, is kept in an expensive mental hospital in Barcelona. During a remission, he is discharged and goes to Malta to serve as a compassionate pimp, a bellboy, and good company for everyone in the group.

The structure of the novel is complex and multi-voiced, incorporating fragments of the archaeologists' diaries, personal letters, and emails. Yet the major part of the novel is Moras' journal, which the reader follows, spellbound, because, in fact, the novel is all about Moras. In addition to being a specific account of the puzzling events, his journal is a poetic revelation, a metaphor, and above all — the central cryptogram to decode.



About the author:

ALLA GORBUNOVA was born in Leningrad in 1985 and studied philosophy at St. Petersburg State University. She is a poet and the author of several books of prose. The collection of short stories, *It's the End of the World, My Love*, became the most discussed literary publication in 2020 and received The New Literature Prize 2020. Gorbunova received several nominations for the National Bestseller Prize, her prose entered long lists of the Big Book Award in 2020 and 2021. With her poetry, Alla Gorbunova won the Debut Prize 2005 and the Andrei Bely Prize 2019. Her poems and prose have been translated into many languages. Deep Vellum Publishing launches Gorbunova's prose in the English translation in 2023.

Selected Bibliography

2022 — **The Summer**, *autofiction, novel*

2021 — **Another Matter**, *short stories*

2020 — **It's the End of the World, My Love**, *short stories*

2017 — **Ings & Oughts**, *short stories*

The New Literature Award 2020

Longlisted for the **Big Book Award 2021, 2020**

Nominated for the **National Bestseller Prize 2020, 2017**

Andrei Bely Prize 2019

Shortlisted for the **New Literature Award 2018**

Nominated for **XXIX Premio Letterario Camaiore 2017** (Italy)

Shortlisted for **Andrei Bely Prize 2011**

Debut Prize 2005

Nominated for the **National Bestseller Prize 2020**Nominated for the **New Literature Award 2021****Elena Shubina Publishing (AST)**

Short stories, 2021

221 pp

Another Matter

A collection of brilliant short stories that's equal parts Kafka, Chekhov, and sketch comedy.

Intelligent and emotional, heartfelt and sardonic, imaginative and gritty, Alla Gorbunova's gemlike miniatures are a serious literary accomplishment. In her third book of prose, the award-winning St. Petersburg writer reveals the extraordinary and the meaningful in the everyday. Set in Moscow and Petersburg in the troubled nineties and aughts, these philosophical, frightening, and mordantly funny tales feature hitchhikers and street artists, over-protective grandparents and terrible boyfriends, teenage outcasts and lifelong rebels, philosophers and schoolchildren. And all the members of this misfit cast are transformed by Gorbunova's unique and generous storytelling, redeemed through wit, close observation, and grace.

Throughout this poignant and hilarious collection, Gorbunova draws on her own life as a rebellious teenager, university student, accomplished poet, and, eventually, a mother. For a young girl, an angry lapdog be-

comes the world's most dangerous animal. A promising future as a professor somehow dead-ends into a day job as a nude artist's model. A juvenile prank at a high school reunion becomes a final farewell to a beloved relative. A rusty old alarm-clock is the key to understanding the nature of time, and a parent's quest to retrieve her son's toy car is a testament both to unconditional love and to the futility of human effort.

Gorbunova's stories borrow from philosophical thought experiments, contemporary autofiction, and a long Russian tradition of funny anecdotes. As usual, she handles profound metaphysical questions with a deceptively light touch, and the results are both inimitable and unforgettable.

Selected quotes

Alla Gorbunova's prose is deeply authentic, and speaks to all sorts of readers — from authoritative literary critics, artists, and philosophers, to college and high school students. This book is no exception. Hilarious, sad, poignant, and occasionally frightening, these wonderfully lively tales are shot through with the light of her soul, the light of "another matter."

Lyrical sketches that are profound rather than long — with something in them of medieval exempla, the Japanese *zuihitsu*, and the comic anecdote, in which everything is just fine, except when it isn't. Many of these tales are as paradoxical as their heroine, who remains somehow at a distance from everyday life while being in the middle of it all. As she herself admits, over half of her consciousness is an inferno of anxiety and terror, while the rest is in a primeval paradise wherein where evil is impossible.

Ksenia Buksha

the prize-winning author of The Freedom Factory

With her third book of prose Gorbunova develops the tradition of concocting texts on the borderline between reality and fiction. In part, it is diary notes, in part — adventures of her lyrical hero, or both.

prochtenie.org

The anecdotes from the blurred life in this collection under a snowy-white cover is a bubble wrap carefully preserving the anti-matter (that Gorbunova coined). Alla Gorbunova is not at haste with sharing it, as it is too intimate. More intimate, probably, than she herself. She tells about her son, about her current experience, and it feels that she is more afraid of sharing those, than stories from her past, retold and repeated. Gorbunova probes the water with her little finger, offering us a sample of her intimate revelations, as she wants to make sure if the water is too cold for a substance that fine.

Gorky.media

The material world is important. The transcendental can permeate things. Things can accumulate memory and time. They can speak and think. Sometimes I get to hear their thoughts. Strictly speaking, these are not thoughts in our habitual understanding, but a certain murmur, noise, movement, tension — something happening inside the matter, though nothing semantically meaningful. Things are restless on the inside.

says Alla Gorbunova

Nominated for the **National Bestseller Prize 2018**Shortlisted for the **New Literature Award 2018**

Limbus Press
Short stories, 2017

Elena Shubina Publishing (AST)
Short stories, 2021
240 pp

Translation rights sold
World English Deep Vellum
Bulgarian Scalino
Italian LietoColle

Ings & Oughts

A testament to the powers of the imagination from one of Russia's best contemporary writers, *The Lives of Monsters and Other Stories* is an uncanny masterpiece with echoes of Dante, Beckett, and Borges.

Grouped according to themes of romance, philosophy, fate, fantasy and fable, Gorbunova's debut collection of stories takes a jaundiced view of the world, turning a magical lens on all-too-familiar problems. There is the woman who is horrified to discover that her husband doesn't have a soul and the university professor who unwittingly wanders through a post-Soviet hell. Violence and romance hound the employees at a sun-bleached country market, and myth meets modernity when Scylla and Charybdis run into dating woes.

Not since Calvino has a writer twisted the art of the fairy tale to create as stunning a catalogue of miracles and horrors. Gorbunova's stories are filled with ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances, as well as extraordinary people caught up in daily mundanity. Long turning the heads of Russian audiences with her wild and wonderful award-winning poetry, Gorbunova turns here to playful explorations of philosophi-

cal concerns about life, being, and meaning, combining clever satire and shocking flights of fancy into an imaginative menagerie all her own. *The Lives of Monsters and Other Stories* is sure to put one of Russia's youngest and most brilliant literary stars onto the international stage.

Ings and Oughts is my first book of prose. I believe it has some drive and compassion. I wanted to name it Tales For Nutties, then came about with To Ashes, and then came the final title, Ings & Oughts. Yet Tales for Nutties is an important part of the text and it defines its audience, too. To Ashes is the name of the story about a man walking in sunglasses in winter because he did not want to see the world to its ashes, by watching and burning it to ashes by the act of viewing. So now I told you about two secret planes of my book, and now you are to decide what is "ings" and "oughts" here.

Alla Gorbunova

About the author:

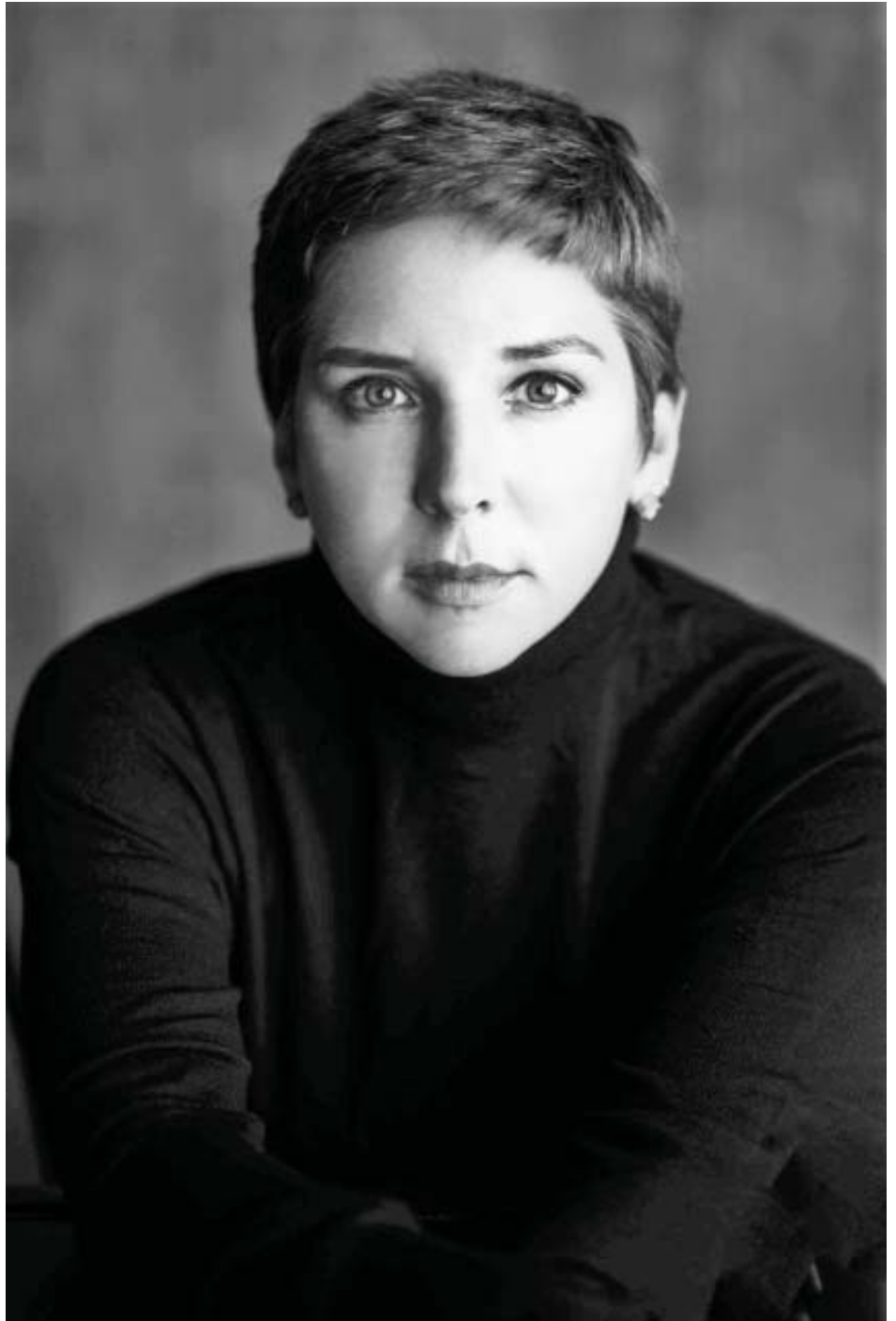
KATERINA GORDEEVA (b. 1977) is one of Russia's most famous independent journalists. Until 2012, she worked as a TV reporter for the federal television channel NTV. During her time at NTV, she reported as from the frontlines of Chechnya, Afghanistan, and Iraq as a war correspondent. She later resigned from the channel due to a disagreement with the channel's programming agenda.

Katerina left Moscow out of protest in 2014, after Russia's remorseless annexation of Crimea and seizure of part of Eastern Ukraine. In 2020, she created her own YouTube channel, which today has more than 2 million subscribers.

To make her documentary film *Humans At War*, Katerina Gordeeva travelled to dozens of refugee shelters in both Europe and Russia. She collected first-person accounts by interviewing of people with opposing views about their experiences and how the war had drastically changed their lives. This three-hour testimonial film has been viewed by more than 3 million people.

In the summer of 2022, Gordeeva was named as one of the top 10 most influential independent journalists in Russia. She is a five-time winner of the Redcollegia Award, an independent prize that recognizes the work of journalists doing ground-breaking work despite government pressure. Gordeeva was awarded the Anna Politkovskaya International Journalism Prize in August in 2022, an award that truly honors her commitment to independent journalism. In September 2022, the Russian government named Gordeeva a "foreign agent," a title that is often compared to the term "enemy of people," which was used in the Soviet Union during the Stalin era.

Katerina's daily work continues to demonstrate her tremendous devotion to unbiased journalism during these very challenging times.



Selected Bibliography

2024 — **Take My Grief Away**, *non-fiction*

Awards

Geschwister-Scholl Preis 2024

Longlisted for **Moore Prize for Human Rights Writing 2024**

Shortlisted for **Leipzig Book Fair Prize 2024**

Winner of **Geschwister-Scholl Preis** 2024

Longlisted for **Moore Prize for Human Rights Writing** 2024

Shortlisted for **Leipzig Book Fair Prize** 2024



Take My Grief Away

Non-fiction, reportage, interviews
Meduza, 2024

Translation rights

World English Ebury/Penguin Random House
(pre-empt)

German Droemer Knauer (pre-empt)

Spanish Comanegra

Catalan Comanegra

Dutch Murrow/Overamstel Uitgevers (pre-empt)

Czech Maraton (auction)

Italian 21Lettere

Hungarian Helikon

Swedish Celandier

Estonian Sinisukk

Latvian Zvaigzne

Finnish Minerva

Polish Sonia Draga

Japanese Hakusuisha Publishing

Full English
translation
available

Take My Grief Away

Take My Grief Away contains raw and heartbreaking first-person accounts of harrowing war experiences, collected by Katerina Gordeeva, a prize-winning independent journalist who was named “a foreign agent” by Russian state officials in autumn 2022. Gordeeva interviews people at refugee centers in Russia and Europe after February 24th, when the war in Ukraine began. Common grief unites these people who come from different backgrounds and whose views are often diametrically opposed.

These stories, will transform what you know about this ongoing war. These voices need to be heard.

Take My Grief Away is a book of reportage and interviews conducted and written by Katerina Gordeeva. Gordeeva, one of modern Russia's most prominent independent journalists, received the Anna Politkovskaya International Journalism Prize in August 2022 — and was named one of the top 10 most influential independent journalists in Russia by Romir Research Holding.

Katerina spent months shuttling between refugee centers in Russia and Europe, and visiting Ukraine. The result of her travels is Humans at War, a 3.5-hour documentary on her YouTube channel, which has been viewed by 3 million people. Material that Gordeeva gathered while making the film — but left out of the final cut — was adapted for Take My Grief Away.

Katerina succeeds in collecting and telling the life stories and dramas of people with diametrically opposed views. The book juxtaposes twenty-four unique stories — each a first-person account of lives ruined in the most unthinkable ways.

The list of the stories' heroes includes:

- Julia from Mariupol, a young woman joking that she can stick a magnet on the shrapnel in the back of her head.
- Marina from Mariupol, who told Katerina about cockroaches.
- Svetlana Petrenko, an eighty-four-year-old retiree who lost her mind after shellings and slipped back into her childhood, thinking it was 1942 and fascists had occupied her native Avdiivka.
- Ruslan Miroshnichenko, a physical education teacher from Mariupol who dreamed of a demon shortly before their section in the apartment building collapsed.
- Stefania Cecchini, a farmer from Italy who sheltered three families from Mykolaiv at her home.
- Inna from Mariupol, who went out for a walk with her dog. While she was gone, one of Kadyrov's tanks fired at her apartment, where her husband and other dog were. They died.
- Ilya, a guy missing a leg. He volunteered for the Security Service of Ukraine and was severely injured by a mine.
- Lyuba, a pregnant woman who couldn't crouch down while under fire.
- Tamara Sergeevna, mother of a soldier who returned from captivity with his eyes poked out.
- Lena, a woman whose husband was killed by Russian soldiers, though she was saved by Russian soldiers.
- Kora, a dog who was saved in Bucha.

„Gordeeva has no archaic dilemmas about sticking to professional standards or intervening in a life. The storylines and people collected in this book are staggering. Tragedies, the journey of the Ukrainian people from incomprehension to fury, through rage... A wound that is now permanent.

— Dmitry Muratov, chief editor of Novaya Gazeta, Nobel Prize winner

About the author:

SERGEY KUZNETSOV is a contemporary Russian writer, journalist, entrepreneur, and educator. He played a key role in shaping post-Soviet independent journalism in Russia, focusing mainly on movies and literature, and in 2011 became the only Russian journalist to have received a Knight Fellowship in journalism from Stanford University. Sergey contributes to American periodicals, including *The New York Times*, *The Huffington Post*, and others.

Kuznetsov is the author of a dozen books of prose, including *The Butterfly Skin*, a thriller published in 12 languages, including English, German, and French, and *Round Dance of Water*, published in English by Dalkey Archive at the end of 2022. He has received numerous nominations for prestigious literary prizes and was a finalist for the Big Book Award and the New Horizons Award in the category of best novel in science fiction and fantasy.

In 2018, Sergey Kuznetsov, together with his wife Ekaterina Kadiyeva, launched the international middle school Le Sallay Academy, with branches in France and the United States. Since 2013, Kuznetsov has lived with his family in France.

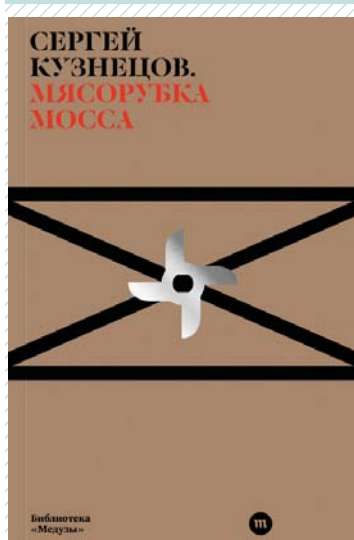


Selected Bibliography

- 2025 — **Meat Grinder**, *novel*
- 2019 — **The Teacher Dymov**, *novel*
- 2019 — **Living and All Grown Up**, *trilogy, novels*
- 2016 — **Kaleidoscope: Expendable Materials**, *novel*
- 2010 — **The Round Dance of Water**, *novel*
- 2005 — **Butterfly Skin**, *novel*
- 2004 — **PG21** (*in co-authorship with Linor Goralik*) *novel*
- 2004 — **The Nineties: A Fairy-Tale**, *trilogy, novel*

Awards

- Shortlisted for the **New Horizons Prize** 2017, 2019
- Longlisted for **Yasnaya Polyana Award** 2018, 2019
- Shortlisted for the **New Literature Award** 2018
- Longlisted for the **Big Book Award** 2016, 2018
- Man of the Year 5771** by the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia 2011
- Finalist of the **Big Book Award** 2011
- The Knight Fellowship** from Stanford University 2001



Meduza Project

Novel, 2025
338 pp
145 000 words

Translation rights
All rights available

Complete
English translation
available

Meat Grinder

What if guilt turned into a deadly virus springing up a pandemic of suicides and suicide killings across continents?

Razor-sharp and bold as Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian*, raw and disturbing as Marlon James' *A Brief History of Seven Killings*, *Meat Grinder* takes you on a roller-coaster ride across years, continents and fates. Sergey Kuznetsov brilliantly dissects the ideas of personal vs collective guilt, memory vs history, and considers violence from the perspectives of culture, society, sex and, ultimately, human nature.

2030. While studying the statistics of a recent wave of murder-suicides and self-destruction, big data analyst Kevin Mead discovers that the spread patterns of these incidents resemble the progression of a pandemic. However, he never manages to fully understand the nature of the disease later named after him, before falling victim to the virus himself in a horrendous suicide.

Among the novel's versatile cast are Thierry and Sonia, a young couple spending their second honeymoon on *Pleasure Island*, a hidden tropical paradise; Michelle, the glamorous owner of a Paris marketing agency who once had a bittersweet love affair with Thierry, along with her teenage son Quentin and her non-binary lover Vic; Sonia's parents, Russian-Jewish immigrants who built a successful business in the US; Mirabel, a flight attendant battling alcoholism and nymphomania; Charlie Kumamoto, a Japanese-American marine stationed on the far side of *Pleasure Island*; and survivors of the Yugoslav wars, still struggling to forget their past and heal wounds already passed down to their children. All of them, in one way or another, will encounter Mead's disease as the epidemic spreads swiftly across the world.

Its first stage resembles the flu, the second — a transcendental trip, and in the third, immense guilt builds within the afflicted individual, until it becomes unbearable. This guilt may be directed at parents, children, spouses, lovers, the underprivileged, ravaged nature, and victims of wars and violent outbreaks. The feeling of unbearable guilt pushes the afflicted person to the edge, where suicide seems the only way out.

However, not everyone succumbs to the disease. Some possess innate immunity; for others, the disease takes a mild form, and some are saved by the arrival of a vaccine. But how safe is the vaccine itself? By safeguarding people from the sense of guilt, wouldn't the vaccine kill conscience itself? The questions are many, and now groups of religious extremists storm the medical lab building...

Sergey Kuznetsov drew inspiration from books like *A Brief History of Seven Killings* by Marlon James, *Blood Meridian* by Cormac McCarthy, *2666* by Roberto Bolaño, and, above all, *Infinite Jest*. The common denominator is the authors' intent to confront the reader with the unbearable: depression, pain, suffering, and violence. *Meat Grinder* adds guilt and the torment of conscience to the mix.

Conceived as a reflection on the pandemic, *Meat Grinder* was nearly complete when the war in Ukraine began in February 2022. Its themes shifted from violence to guilt and PTSD, made even more relevant by the war, though the novel is set in an alternate future where it never occurred.

In *Meat Grinder*, Sergey Kuznetsov stays true to his signature writing approach: the novel is a gaudy yet finely interlaced patchwork of life stories. Each individual voice is surgically pitched and masterfully directed into a powerful symphony on modern-time ambiguities and fears. This is a brutal, frightening, and relentless book, but through the darkness, a faint glimmer of hope still flickers.

Longlisted for the **National Bestseller Prize 2011**

Nominated for the **New Literature Award 2011**

Finalist of the **Big Book Award 2011**



AST
2010
Elena Shubina Publishing (AST)
Novel, 2019
608 pp

Translation rights sold
World English Dalkey Archive Press
Arabic AS Publishers

Complete
English translation
available

The Round Dance of Water

From the man Arturo Pérez-Reverte has called “the most talented young Russian author” comes this extraordinary family saga, a journey into the depths of the human soul.

The Round Dance of Water is an intricately patterned portrait of three generations of a large family. In the narrative there is no division into primary and secondary characters: each individual fate bears significant weight and streams into the common flow of the turbulent history of the 20th century.

There's Nikita Melnikov, 37, who runs a small aquarian design business. As he soaks in his young lover's sweat, Maria, Nikita's wife, is verging on despair, crushed by her fruitless attempts to conceive a child. She sees her barren body as a vessel for other people's dramas, living through the grieves and sorrows of strangers and opening herself up to the tragedies of people she could never meet in the real world. They come to her in dreams, these strangers, and Maria, an unwilling witness, never imagines that the history of her own family could in fact be intertwined with these sad stories.

Alexander Brisov, Nikita's 30-year old step-brother, is a gifted artist whose once anti-bourgeois escapist actions have now turned into frequent drinking bouts. In his bleak, vodka-infused fears, he is being dragged to the bottom by monsters and drowned men. He suspects that he knows who these ghosts are — they are the victims of the purges, arrested and interrogated in the 1930s by his grandfather Grigory Brisov, a member of the Russian nobility who became an NKVD officer to save his own and his family's lives.

We also follow the life of Nikita's and Alexander's cousin. Anya, 33, is a single mother who works as a salesclerk in a shoe shop. A strong and independent young woman, she takes after her grandmother,

who served as a sniper in WWII. Shielding herself from attachments with the motto Be afraid of no one, rely on no one — and trouble can't touch you, Anya is caught unprepared when her new lover offers to build a normal life together with her. Time here is like deep water separating people from different epochs; yet it is also numerous streams that flow from the past into modern days. Actions taken by the characters' parents in the past echo decisions their children make in the present — strange parallels seen through the looking glass of the refracted surface of time.

As the finely pitched narrative moves between generations, locales, and times, so shifts the tone of the text. Each character's story is told in part by themselves and as imagined by another member of the family, making for unexpected twists and discoveries. The journey into time and human psychology has also become a field for literary adventure for Sergey Kuznetsov. Written in a clear, elegant style, the novel is filled with literary allusions and is rich with cultural codes. The range of voices is diverse and broad — from Rudyard Kipling through Andrei Platonov and Daniil Kharmis, Alexander Solzhenitsyn and the Strugatsky brothers; from canonic film noir to Japanese anime. The masterfully directed chorus is an outstanding accomplishment, a pure artistic delight, and the novel represents a genuine exploration of culture of the 20th century.

Selected quotes

A whirlpool that drags a swimmer to the bottom, into death and oblivion, it is also a waterspout lifting one above the surface of life. Finally, it's the eternal cycle we know about from our schooldays. Sergey Kuznetsov's novel is a battle with the fear of death.

The recipe is simple: love those who are close to you, and remember that you are neither the beginning, nor the end. Yes, this unusual family saga also resembles a whirlpool, engulfing its readers and holding them till the last page.

An unusual chronicle of our time, of the past decades. It's not only the story of various characters, not only a portrait gallery. This is a history of human passions, a “rounddance” of desire told in 108 chapters (an essential number in Buddhist culture).

Echo of Moscow Radio

Leonid Yuzefovich
writer

Longlisted for Yasnaya Polyana Award 2019

Shortlisted for the New Horizons Award 2019



Livebook
Novel, 2019
340 pp

Complete
English translation
available

Living and All Grown Up

Stranger Things in a Cold War times setting.

Living and All Grown Up is set in an alternative world where there is a border separating the living from the dead. There has been a war between the two; however, some forms of communication and cooperation exist. The general feeling is that a bad peace is better than a good war. However, the main characters struggle to find their standing and place their loyalties. Their choice is either to go with state propaganda or investigate the shadow areas and history of the conflict, to change the world and find a possibility for coexisting. Nicka, Marina, Leva, and Gosha are 13 years old, they live in a strictly ordered society of the living in the aftermath of the bloody war with the dead which split the known world in two. They are taught that the dead are the enemy, every contact is forbidden and labeled treason. However, technologies, consumer goods, gossip, and movies trickle into the world of the living, and are of great value and interest. What's across the Border? Should the teenagers trust the adults that all the dead are evil? Or is there more to this black and white order of things?

When the friends stumble upon an opportunity to communicate with a teenage dead how can they resist? They become friends with Mike who showers them with knowledge of the world of the dead. New gadgets, languages and jargon, new interpretation of the known historical events and social order — Nicka, Marina, Leva, and Gosha are sponging the information. How come their deadly enemy is just like them? He even falls in love with Marina although this is strictly forbidden — there is no time in the world of the dead and Mike will never age.

This seemingly innocent exchange and blossoming friendships turn out to be a trap. The group of friends incidentally help to breach the border and come under attack of zombies and other evil creatures. Their interaction has been flawed all along — scheming adults have been trying to use it to gain control of both worlds. Will they be able to restore the balance?

The reader can easily see through the allusions of the two depicted world — one is controlled, grim and propaganda-driven, the other seductive in its abundance but seemingly soulless and submerged in consumerism. Meaningless consumption and money as the only true value vs ascetic idealism and propaganda. The conflict is recognizable as of the two conflicting ideologies.

This is an adventure and action-packed novel about growing up and making one's mind, making tricky decisions and taking responsibility. Each of the teenagers becomes a hero in their own way, not just by fighting zombies but also making everyday choices that will define their future selves. With likable characters and recognizable conflicts, the novel can be read as a tense YA horror and espionage thriller or a musing on the everlasting issues of death, loyalty and freedom of will.

Selected quotes

This is a story of real friendship, about coming of age, about first love, ethical choices and cynicism, of frankness and betrayal. It also tells that when you are an adult many things look different from what they appeared at the first sight. And it also tells that you should never despair and drop hopes to change the world.

Vasily Vladimirovsky
Mir Fantastiki

Two worlds, introduced by the author, still surround us these days.

Vladimir Larionov
a critic



About the author:

YANA LETT was born in 1992 in Moscow and graduated from the Philology Faculty of Moscow State University. She is a teacher of Russian language, literature, and creative writing. Yana Lett has been writing in different genres — books for children, YA fantasy, techno-fantasy, new weird fiction and magical realism. She is the author of eight books of prose that received nominations and won several national awards since 2018, gaining her wide recognition among the young and adult readership alike. Since 2022 Yana Lett has resided in Mauritius.

Selected quotes

Yana Lett is one of the most promising young Russian science fiction writers. With each new book, her talent unfolds in a fresh way: she can write for both teenagers and adults, delve into deep psychological traumas, and craft thrilling adventures, all with equal persuasiveness.

Vasily Vladimirskiy
a literary critic

Yana Lett finds ways to surprise even the most seasoned reader.

Mir Fantastiki

Selected Bibliography

- 2023 — **Preparators. The Heart of Frost. Book2**, *novel*
2022 — **Preparators. The Hawk's Calling. Book1**, *novel*
2020-2022 — **World of Gaps**, *trilogy*
2021 — **Absence of Anna**, *novel*
2021 — **The Story of Seven Doors**, *children's book*

The New Science Fiction 2018

Interpresscon Prize 2022

Finalist of RosCon 2021

Longlisted for **The New Horizons Prize 2022**

Longlisted for **The New Horizons Prize 2023**

Longlisted for **The New Horizons Prize 2023**

No Sugar Press (AST)
Novel, 2023
576 pp

Preparators. The Hawk's Calling. Book 1

The fans of Leigh Bardugo and George Martin will embrace this new striking universe of thrilling fantasy adventure, fascinating drama and intricate court scheming by Yana Lett, Russia's new bright voice in YA cross-over fiction.

On For many centuries, Kjertania has been bound by eternal ice. In the deadly and alluring Frost that surrounds the cities, only snitirs dwell — extraordinary creatures that exist simultaneously in two layers of reality. It is the snitirs — or, more precisely, parts of their bodies — that sustain life on the continent. Their hearts beat in place of train and car engines, and their eyes pierce the darkness instead of lanterns...

Only preparators — humans with special physical abilities — can hunt them. Their task is to kill the creature's spirit, keeping the body alive — so that its parts can be used for multiple purposes in Kjertania. Annually recruiters take off from the capital all over the country in search of young people who can meet the challenge of Frost as preparators. It is a rare luck when at least one person is found to pass the trial, but this year is different: three young villagers — confident and ambitious Sorta, smart and funny dreamer Ulm, tender and charming Missy — get enlisted on training for this honorable but deadly dangerous service. Each will demonstrate their unique skills during years of practice and all three will have to make decisions that shall define their life paths. What price must be paid for their chosenness, for unexpected and sometimes unwanted abilities?

Sorta demonstrates exceptional hunting skills and is assigned to work in pair with the greatest "hawk", Eric Chrome. He seems arrogant and cold, and Sorta assumes this is because he does not want to feel attachment to a new partner after a recent loss of his previous years-long hunter and friend. Yet this might be not

the only reason — Eric obviously has his own agenda in the court, and the more Sorta knows about Eric the more acute her choice between the loyalty to the service (and the royal court) and to her hawk becomes.

Ulm has always dreamt of exploring the world, and becoming a pilot of Kjertania's grandiose flying vessels would be a career to seek for. Yet his natural inquisitiveness and an eye for minute details is not left unnoticed by the state police, and he is recruited as a detective inspector's hand. When Ulm gets invited to the reception at the court together with other new recruits, he has no idea how his usual charms will work on the royal heiress, and that a small talk with a girl in the palace garden will take him not only into the heart of the princess but also in the center of the court's intricate politics.

Missy, too, falls under charms of a young man from Kjertania's elite. Naïve and open-hearted, she is prepared to sacrifice her career as a hunter to the promise of a family life. Yet does her boyfriend really want this sacrifice?

Yana Lett invites her readers onto a fascinating journey into a new world, filled with dark secrets, terrifying monsters, court intrigues and thrilling adventures. At once a coming-of-age story and a gripping thriller, this story probes on questions that young people often face. Can you fight against the system? What does it take to change your destiny by your own will? How do you choose between love and duty?

Selected quotes

The world created by Yana Lett is intricate, logical, and detailed. It encompasses social inequality, trains crafted from snitir body parts, religious rituals, intrigues, epidemics, and smuggling. The writer has populated Kjertania with a good dozen prominent characters—complex, multidimensional, not reducible to typical fantasy archetypes.

Galina Yuzevovich
a literary critic

A complex weird techno-fantasy with traces of magical realism and horror.

Mir Fantastiki

The book ends not even on a half-word but on a half-syllable, and the tension that had been building since the first chapters intensifies exponentially by the finale. After all, whatever can put an end to eternal cold, if it is even possible, is very distant. And the Frost is always very close.

papmambook.ru

I have always dreamt of writing a truly epic book — with an original and vivid world, a multitude of characters, and a multi-layered plot. 'Preparators' came to me as if the story had chosen me to be its storyteller. It's a tale of heroism and choice, loyalty and betrayal, death and love. I sincerely hope that I have been able to tell it as it deserves to be told, and that readers will love it as much as I do.

Yana Lett
about Preparators



About the author:

VLADIMIR MEDVEDEV was born in the Zabaikal region of Siberia but was brought up in Tajikistan, where he has spent most of his life. He has worked as a fitter, a newspaper correspondent, a photo reporter, a teacher in a village school, a laborer in a geological research group, and a literary editor. Medvedev is the author of numerous essays, novellas, and short stories published in literary magazines and a collection of short horror stories, *Hunting with Kukuj* (Limbus Press, St Petersburg, 2007). Medvedev's recognition as a prose writer came with his novel *Zahhak* (ArsisBooks, Moscow, 2017) that was shortlisted for The Yasnaya Polyana Award and The Russian Booker Prize 2017. The novel was translated into eight languages, including English, French and German.

Selected Bibliography

2017 — **Zahhak**, *novel*

2007 — **Hunting with Kukuj**, *short stories*

Shortlisted for the **Russian Booker 2017**

Finalist of the **Yasnaya Polyana Award 2017**

Finalist of **Prix Pierre-François Caillé de la traduction 2020** (France)

Shortlisted for the **Russian Booker 2017**Finalist of the **Yasnaya Polyana Award 2017**Finalist of **Prix Pierre-François Caillé de la traduction 2020 (France)****ArsisBooks**

Novel, 2017

460 pp

Translation rights sold

World English Old Street Publishing

Polish Sonia Draga

German Aufbau

French Noir sur blanc

Albanian Ombra

Macedonian Bata Press

Romanian Pandora

Arabic AS Publishers

Zahhak

Simultaneously an intense period drama, a page-turning thriller, and a brilliant poetic parable on the contagious nature of evil, *Zahhak* has resonated powerfully with a vast readership in Russia and indisputably became the brightest literary event in the year of its publication.

Zahhak is set during the most turbulent and violent period in Tajikistan's post-Soviet history — a civil war unleashed in the early 1990s. After the murder of her Tajik husband, a Russian widow and her teenage twins, Andrei and Zarina, need to run for their lives to Talhak, a tiny mountain village on the border with Afghanistan, where her husband's relatives and his former (or second) family live. Each day in the village turns into a struggle for survival thanks to food shortages, an exhausting and unfamiliar job, jealousy and undisguised hostility from the Tajik widow, a different language, and villagers' strange beliefs and traditions. All these mundane hardships, though, seem like small troubles when a local field commander with a gang of criminals calling themselves a military unit settle in the village. Zuhursho likes to appear in public in a military disguise with a huge snake on his shoulders — an homage to Zahhak, an evil snake-armed tyrant from Ferdowsi's epic poem, *The Shahnameh*. Just like his mythological role model, Zuhursho rules through methodically exercised terror and violence. He plans to plant opium poppies in the local fields, benefitting from the village's proximity to existing drug trafficking routes. Each villager is literally put face to face with the evil nature of power and forced to make uneasy and often impossible choices that could cost them their lives. The Russian family is drawn into the epicenter of terror when Zuhursho decides to make the Russian girl, Zarina, his wife.

Zahhak is told as a polyphonic tale: seven voices with original melodies meld into a dramatic symphony in the novel's climax. Sixteen-year-old Andrei learns to adapt to a swiftly shifting and sinister reality, desperate as he fails to help his mother and twin sister. Zarina, Andrei's twin, unwittingly triggers a chain of

tragic events and inevitably falls as their most miserable victim. The third voice belongs to their uncle Jorub, a local vet, whose views based on the respect of centuries-old traditions and understanding of natural laws collide with the evil chaos brought by Zuhursho and his accomplices. A village boy Karim, nicknamed Pumpkin, who's ridiculed by his fellow villagers and the bandits alike, falls in love with Zarina and cherishes the dream of marrying the girl. Generally a comic figure, Karim will play a tragic role in the novel's outcome, as he kills Zuhursho in revenge for his beloved. The fifth narrator is Oleg, a journalist from Moscow who spent his childhood in Tajikistan and has now returned to the country to interview the country's infamous leader, a "thief in law" named Bobo Sangak. Oleg gets stuck in Talhak and has to witness the atrocities of the local tyrant, with the vain hope of escaping and publishing the evidence. Then there's the enigmatic figure of Davron — an Afghan War veteran suffering from severe post-traumatic psychological issues. Arriving in Talhak as Zuhursho's military hand, Davron openly despises the village's chief, but adheres strictly to the promise he's made and receives orders as well as his own secret system of beliefs and fears. Last but not least is a local Sufi sheikh who was a doctor of philosophy at Moscow State University in the recent past but had to abandon his promising academic career, young wife, and busy lifestyle in the capital in order to inherit the position of village sheikh and Sufi teacher from his father.

With exceptional brilliance, Medvedev forms his characters from flesh and blood, leaving the reader with no choice but to gulp down each new chapter in the desperate hope that the characters will survive the war's meaningless meat grinder.

Selected quotes

Zahhak is definitely one of the most important books of the year, and one of the best novels written in Russian in recent years... It is extremely difficult to live with this novel about the civil war in Tajikistan: each page, if not each line, makes one want to desert. Medvedev doesn't overuse physiological details and blood is shed in strict doses, but the novel's emotional tension and terror literally force readers out of the text. However — and the reader must accept this before beginning the book — the reader is highly unlikely to escape the novel's grip. <...> A poignant, gripping, disturbing, extremely terrifying — and at the same time indispensable — read.

meduza.io

Zahhak is the rare novel that contains everything in proper proportions: rich story, colorful texture, original characters' voices, good language, a smart mixture of the recent past with fiction, and even an allusion to the Iranian epos which gives the novel its somewhat

mysterious title. The novel tells of a historical period when borders between epochs, cultures, languages, good, and evil were swept away by the same avalanche, and when people were turned into strangers but had to stick together to survive. In short, this novel tells the story of any civil war that could occur in any place and at any time.

Gorky.media

Zahhak's diverse characters are cruel, naive, funny, dealing with violence and the emergence of de facto loyalties over the ruins of the Soviet state, while the never forgotten old feudal wars come to surface.

Le Courrier (France)

It was supposed to be an entertaining book. Yet how, against the background of the beginning of the civil war in Tajikistan the 90s? Vladimir Medvedev succeeded.

Der Tag (Germany)



About the author:

NATALIYA MESHCHANINOVA was born in 1982, is an acclaimed Russian film director. She has written screenplays for numerous feature films and TV shows, including *Another Year* (2014), *Arrhythmia* (2017), *Anna's War* (2018), and *Storm* (2019). Meshchaninova made her directorial debut in 2014 with *The Hope Factory*, which follows a group of troubled twenty-somethings in the industrial town of Norilsk. Her feature film *Anna's War* received the best film award from all major national film prizes. The autobiographical book *Stories of a Life* is Meshchaninova's first prose work. Originally written as a series of viral Facebook posts, then released as a cult hit in St. Petersburg, Meshchaninova's memoir-novel was nominated for the 2018 Russian National Bestseller Prize and became a finalist for the 2018 New Literature Award, receiving a heated response from the critical community and readers alike. Today it is almost unanimously considered a pillar of the #metoo movement in Russia.

Finalist of the **Firecracker Award in Fiction 2023**

Winner of the **PEN/Heim Translation Fund Grant 2020**

Nominated for the **National Bestseller Prize 2018**

Shortlisted for the **New Literature Award 2018**

Selected Bibliography

2017 — **Stories of a Life**, *novel*

Finalist of the **Firecracker Award in Fiction 2023**

Winner of the **PEN/Heim Translation Fund Grant 2020**

Nominated for the **National Bestseller Prize 2018**

Shortlisted for the **New Literature Award 2018**



Seans

Novel, memoir, 2017
128 pp

Translation rights sold

World English Deep Vellum
Bulgarian Janet 45

Audio book rights

Vimbo Publishing

Complete
English translation
available

Stories of a Life

From one of Russia's most celebrated film directors comes a book of raw, honest, punch-in-the-gut autobiographical stories about coming of age in a provincial town in the early 1990s. With unflinching honesty, grit, a close eye for the tiniest detail, and darkly tinted, self-deprecating humour that recall the work of David Sedaris, Meshchaninova produces devastatingly confessional prose about nonchalant teenage cruelty, domestic violence, and sexual abuse. *Stories of a Life*, however, is not just another contribution to a #MeToo choir — Meshchaninova's brisk and authentic tone turns her stories into a powerful tool to fight back against abusive realities.

Stories of a Life is shaped by the narrator's conflicting and knot-tight relationships with her mother. Meshchaninova worries about her mother's bad heart so is afraid to upset her; she is afraid of not being like her mother and is tortured by the fear of not being her real biological daughter... Natasha is facing the unnerving and harrowing truth about her mother's awareness of what Natasha's stepfather did to her, stalking the nine-year-old girl, whom he molested and raped at the age of twelve. At the book's end, in a story entitled Mom, Nataliya directly addresses her mother in a heartbreaking ode that accepts and embraces her mother's real self. Extremely frank and private, *Stories of a Life* is also a book of unvarnished portrayals of provincial life in Russia during the early 1990s. Meshchaninova documents a reality where a teenager must navigate a community with diffused borders and a sense of freedom reminiscent of *A Clockwork Orange*, plagued by mundane crime, addiction, and violence. Her text serves as

a coping mechanism that the narrator herself calls "literary exhibitionism". The book grows into the struggle of a girl coming of age in an aggressively non-congenial society. Meshchaninova does not offer commentary on her feelings and emotions, and she doesn't overstate the harsh experiences she had to cope with. In a laconic, raw, and minimalistic manner, she states her story and calls her readers as witnesses. Refusing to be a victim — though her experience as a 12-year-old teenager who was sexually abused by her stepfather is nothing less than being the victim of a crime — or a part of these brutal realities, Nataliya seeks power in the word, molding a different world in her texts, avenging her foes in diaries and notes, and watching her often graphic hatred-infused images come to life. Quite eerily the author states in the text, "whatever you write will come true".

Selected quotes

(*Stories of a Life*) ... is a thinly veiled family memoir disguised as a fictional bildungsroman. Set in late-'90s, post-Soviet Russia, the novel explores the experience of growing up alongside everyday abuse — almost always gender-based, primarily sexual, just as often psychological as physical.

LARB

Tearing herself free with screams, taunts, and something very much like poetry, Meshchaninova has given us an obscenely private text as frightening as the novels of Stephen King and as sharply formed as the tragedies of Racine... it's not every year that a voice so pure and powerful emerges in Russian literature.

Galina Yuzevovich
meduza.io

Meshchaninova's scenarios are skin torn to blood, pink glasses discarded as unnecessary, truth uncomfortable for the inhabitants of parallel reality.

Elena Tanakova
Gallerix

The author, in general, is not trying to shock, she is simply not afraid to say. But this simultaneous openness and ruthlessness strikes with unexpected force and long action. Leads the reader out of their comfort zone. Makes him an involuntary and seemingly guilty observer.

Elena Makeenko
Gorky Media

It is not often that people are ready to open up, and only the willingness to open up distinguishes real literature.

Aglaya Kurnosenko
scriptwriter

This story is not about disaster, but about what happens to the survivors... This is the new Russian prose.

Vladimir Pankratov
a literary critic, founder of Fiction35 Prize

About the author:

YANA MOSKALENKO, born 1997, holds two master's degrees in literature: from HSE University (Literary Craft) and Pompeu Fabra (Comparative Studies in Literature, Art and Thought).

Dedicated to furthering her academic exploration into Russian literature, she began a PhD in Slavonic Studies at UCL (London) in 2024.

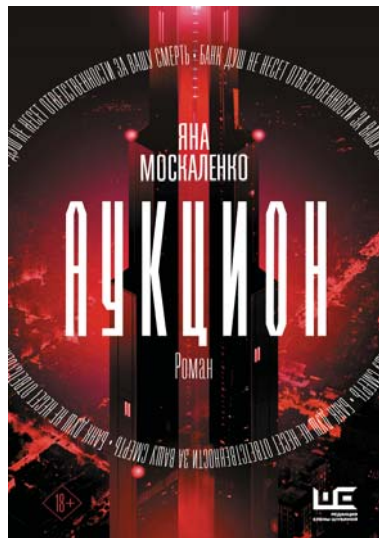
Yana continues to work in journalism, and with various cultural institutions that focus on Russian humanities and culture.



Selected Bibliography

2024 — **The Auction**, *novel*

"Captivating and compelling narrative"
Maya Kucherskaya, writer



Elena Shubina Publishing (AST)

Novel, 2024

444 pp

Translation rights

All rights available

English sample
available

The Auction

Brokeback Mountain meets Total Recall in this riveting debut that heralds the emergence of a strong new literary voice in Russia's young writers' scene. The Auction introduces a disturbing dystopian world where souls have become a highly demanded trade item, with a poignant gay love story at its core.

Due to Russia's legal bans on "homosexual propaganda," the published edition was heavily censored, turning the complex gay relationship into a strong male bond. What we present to international audiences is the original, uncensored version.

In a world divided between the prosperous City and the destitute Quarters the pursuit of eternal life has evolved into a booming industry.

At the centre of this world lies the City itself — affluent yet restrictive, safe and sterile to the point where swearing is a punishable offence. The City is encircled by a wall, beyond which sprawl the gritty and impoverished Quarters — free, wild and full of violence. Beyond Quarters are the Outskirts, with conditions so dire that people are forced to raise children for slaughter — upon reaching the age of 20, they are required to sell their soul.

These very souls are the City's foremost object of prestige-driven consumption, the primary substance of abuse, and the ultimate status game. A technology invented by the enigmatic scientist N. allows to transplant a soul from donor to recipient, where the recipient rejuvenates — while the donor dies. Yet once you embark on soul transplants, you enter a slippery slope, needing ever more transplants, each soul costing a fortune. And then there are side effects...

At the heart of it all stands the Auction House, selecting, selling, and transplanting souls — a focal point of the novel's intrigue revolving around main characters, each with an agenda and a quest of their own.

Varlam, an intellectual prodigy, plucked from the grim alleys of the Quarters and groomed by N. to helm the Soul Bank, is calling the shots. Learning of the identity of the next recipient he sees

an opportunity to exact revenge on Adrian, the new King of the Quarters, responsible for his mother's death. With a cold resolve, he plots to use the person closest to Adrian as a soul donor.

Adrian, born and raised in the inner circle of the King of the Quarters, has only recently seized the power. Outwardly a ruthless thug determined to claim a soul to solidify his rule, he is still just a damaged kid capable of deep feelings, carefully preserving a secret that shapes his every ambition and action, to protect his best friend and the love of his life.

Together with Dante, his advisor and a former City dweller with a personal score to settle with N., they plot to destroy the Auction House, hoping to dismantle N.'s monstrous empire.

Lisa, once a brilliant pianist from a wealthy City family, now lives in the shadow of her shattered dreams. Haunted by the death of her older sister, Lisa's once-promising future was derailed by grief, leaving her with scars both visible and hidden. Fiercely idealistic and unwaveringly determined, she harbours a deep-seated contempt for the soul industry that dominates the City — a loathing that extends to Varlam, whom she blames for her sister's tragic end.

As their intertwined quests for vengeance unfold, Varlam, Adrian, Dante and Lisa must confront the moral cost of their actions. In a world where the line between life and death is blurred, they grapple with whether revenge is worth losing their humanity.

Selected quotes

In *Never Let Me Go* Ishiguro tells a story about the lives of donors raised for organ transplants. In *The Auction*, it's like we're reading the second part of the story: this time, about those who benefit from such donation. And it seems they aren't having it easy either.

Yana Vagner
writer

World and time are essential elements of a successful novel, and Yana Moskalenko masterfully crafts both in her debut. The expansive and dark universe she creates is meticulously detailed; despite the story unfolding in a hypothetical future, you are completely convinced by its nuances. However, the novel's greatest strength lies in its characters. Varying greatly in speech, appearance, social status, and age, they are bound together by two powerful emotions: hatred and love. For each character, the author develops a unique voice and rhythm, allowing us to understand and empathize with them, regardless of how repulsive they may initially appear.

Marina Stepnova
writer

The standout feature of Yana Moskalenko's novel *The Auction* is its scale and originality. Beneath the fantastic plot lies a rich tapestry of philosophical questions — concerning the ethical boundaries of new technologies, the capabilities of artificial intelligence, and its ongoing competition with the human mind. Yet, perhaps even more profoundly, the novel explores the limits of humanity itself, probing where the human experience truly ends and begins. Exploring such complex issues can be daunting, yet Moskalenko skilfully sidesteps any pitfalls. The result is a captivating and compelling narrative that resonates on both aesthetic and substantive levels.

Maya Kucherskaya
writer

Within *The Auction* lies a complex and expansive story that, crucially, converges with a graceful precision. Only in hindsight do we recognize the absence of romantic air that surrounds it. This novel brims with an extraordinary vitality, setting it apart from the many others — pristine yet anaemic — that populate the landscape of contemporary Russian literature.

Galina Yuzefovich
literary critic



About the author:

VALENTINA NAZAROVA, born 1986, is a Cyprus-based writer, scriptwriter and podcast writer. Nazarova studied creative writing at Northampton University, UK. Her debut book, *The Hidden Track*, written in English, was nominated for the National Bestseller Award, adapted for a web-film in a British-Russian co-production (directed by Bran Lye) and translated into eight languages, including German (Piper). Nazarova's second novel, *The Cookies*, is a thriller focused on crimes in IT and Internet advertising.

Ritual is Nazarova's third thriller, originally written for Storytel Original audio series. Valentina co-wrote a TV series script based on the novel. Nazarova's recent novel *Before Dawn* secured her position as a leading voice in thriller genre in Russia. Film adaptation rights have been sold and Nazarova is developing a script based on her work.

Together with her brother Timofey, Valentina runs a popular podcast on true crime — *The Hills Have Podcast*. Her biggest passions are indie rock, music festivals, and true crime. Nazarova lives in Cyprus, with her husband, two dogs and a ginger cat.

Selected Bibliography

2022 — **Before Dawn**, *novel*

2019 — **The Ritual**, *trilogy, novels*

2018 — **Cookies**, *novel*

2016 — **The Hidden Track**, *novel*

Nominated for the **National Bestseller Prize 2016, 2018, 2020**

Manuscript of the **Year Award 2015**

Nominated for the **National Bestseller Prize 2016****Winner Manuscript of the Year Award 2015****AST**
 Novel, 2016
384 pp
Translation rights sold
 German Piper
 Finnish Into Kustannus
 Estonian Tammeramat
 Hungarian Könyvmolyképző Kiadó
 Latvian Lauku Avize
 Czech Omega
 Polish Sonia Draga
 Arabic AS Publishers
Film rights sold
 English language web series released in 2019, directed
by Brian Lye

 Complete
English translation
available

The Hidden Track

Fans of *The Girl on the Train* will devour this absorbing mystery fuelled by guitar riffs and famous Glastonbury mud. With an atmosphere of growing unease, a gloomy setting in stagnant suburban England, and confronting overlapping stories of the unreliable narrators and its delusive plot's twists, *The Hidden Track* enters the brazen world of modern rock-n-roll from backstage, welcoming its bedazzled readers to explore the nature of blood ties, talent, fandom, and betrayal.

Twenty-one-year-old Nika Lukina is a foreign exchange student in London. She's bright and bubbly and has everything all figured out... or at least she's faking it really well. Nika has a secret. When she was thirteen, her beloved older sister Jenya went missing in a small town in the Midlands. The only thing that Nika has left of Jen is her collection of iconic indie rock albums. Those bands shaped Nika's personality and her perception of beauty, love, life, and her own self.

She tries not to think about what happened until one day, just before the Easter break at uni the past catches up with her in a terribly gruesome way, leaving Nika no choice but to find out what really happened to her sister. Nika posts a blurred video from Glastonbury'07 on her Facebook page in hope that someone might recognize her sister's face. After she receives a quick response from a woman who claims to have been Jen's best friend, Nika takes a train to Notown, the town where her sister lived.

With its abandoned factory buildings turned into lofts, dusty for sale signs on display, and a growing sense of desperation in the air, Notown is a disturbing place to be. The only valuable thing that Nika gains from the meeting with her sister's friend is a shoebox full of Jen's stuff, with an old iPod, among other things. Nika is about to leave the town for good when she receives another message from someone who knew her sister. Nika decides to stay for just one night and rents a room above the old live music pub where her sister worked as a bartender.

The more people she meets and the more questions she asks, the clearer the image of her sister becomes. And Jen wasn't the person Nika always thought her to be.

Jen used to hang out with a local indie rock band called The Red Room. In fact, she dated the lead singer, a sweet and tender hooligan named Chris. A local legend, Chris was meant to become the next Jagger, but he fell out with his best friend, the songwriter and lead guitarist Marc, and quit the band on the same night that Jen went missing.

Nika soon realizes that the band's history is deeply entangled with her sister's disappearance and the only way to discover the truth would be to break into the upcoming Glastonbury Festival, which the The Red Room are headlining.

Haunted by the songs on Jen's iPod and the ghosts of the 'good old days' that everyone in Notown seems to be reminiscing about, Nika sets off on a journey that is far more dangerous than she could have ever imagined. Written as a sequence of Facebook messages that the protagonist exchanges with her sister, the investigation propels itself through the stagnant streets of the suburban Midlands to the heart of England's brazen modern rock-n-roll scene. With her hope for a reply vanishing, Nika keeps telling her missing sibling about the course of the investigation, the people she meets, and the songs she listens to along the way.

Selected quotes

[*The Hidden Track*] is at once a captivating exploration of the call of blood, of an audacious rock-n-roll scene, the unembellished basement world of suburban England, and the modern.

Pavel Rudnev

Chekhov Moscow Art Theater

The genre of the novel is mixed in just the right way: part mystery investigation with a sibling looking for a missing sister as an amateurish detective; part personal journal; part excursion into the backstage world of show business and indie music... This is also a story about a common British life, interesting for its narrator's perspective — it is told not by a suburban dude, but by a stranger.

snob.ru

The Hidden Track has everything to grab a teenager's attention: music, lots of music and musicians, reckless hanging out, spontaneous penniless trips, finding new bright acquaintances and experiences, major music festivals, and a personal, carefully hidden, pain.

There's also suspense that grips until the last page.

And, of course, love that's possible only at the age of seventeen — wrong, and depriving you of will and mind, but a million times bigger than yourself. This novel is up-to-date, action-packed, and cool.

kultur-multur.ru

The novel reads in a flash and is the ideal recipe for those who spend much time on social networks, want to explore life to the fullest, and know who The Libertines are.

foodika.ru

A novel that genuinely surprises and excites. A rocketing, modern, gripping text that competes on a level with international bestsellers. True descriptions, free of clichés, brilliant dialogue, lively characters, language that neither shocks with an overdose of youth jargon nor locks itself into dull literary embellishments. An ingenious writer's freedom is a rare achievement for a debut work.

Echo Moscow

Nominated for the **National Bestseller Prize 2018**

 Eksmo
 Novel, 2018
 380 pp

Translation rights sold
 Czech Omega

Cookies

A corporate thriller with a painfully topical focus on the Internet personal information insecurity turns into an urban noir mystery into a sweeping crime road story and, eventually, into a blood-curdling psycho thriller — in this mind-exploding literary puzzle from a rocketing star in Russia's genre scene.

Serge is an ordinary guy you meet in a corporate office — a computer geek in his late twenties, who resets an email password or gets you a new keyboard. No one would ever guess that Serge survived through a terrible experience in his past that let him scarred for life. Haunted by the ghost of his lost love, Serge carries a perfectly routine but lonely life. He works in an IT department of a London-based company, dresses smartly, cycles to work, eats takeaways, and plays video games. Sometimes, he stays online for the night in a chat with his only friend — in fact, a randomly matched gamer in an online shooter. They don't know each other's real names, they never talk about personal things and yet, when Tron disappears from the chat, Serge sets off on a journey to find his missing friend.

Shortly before disappearance Tron hinted that he came into possession of some extremely sensitive data that, if the word gets around, presents a potential threat to his life. Serge's initial investigation reveals that his friend seems to have fled London for a tiny village in the Northern France. Serge takes an afternoon off work and flies over — only to find his only friend with a bashed-in skull. Local police call the crime a burglary gone wrong, but Serge senses foul play.

The few pieces of evidence in his possession point that Tron — who turns out to have been a high-profile computer engineer — was connected to top managers of major IT corporations. By the time Serge is certain that people behind his friend's murder plan to get rid of him as an unwanted witness — someone has broken into his London flat. Guided by Tron's note of an appointment with a lady named Lisa at a time of world's largest IT and mobile convention and a polaroid picture where Tron stands along with two girls, Serge takes off for Barcelona to meet the mysterious Lisa who might be the only clue to his investigation.

Lisa shares a story of her late boss, a beautiful and successful woman named Rita, chief marketing officer of a scandalous dating app — and the other girl from the photograph. Her accidental death after a huge convention afterparty in the previous year left the industry in shock. Now both Rita and Serge see the connection between the death of the young woman and the murder of his friend. Lisa remembers that shortly before death her boss blackmailed owners of the controversial dating app with her access to the clients' personal information from the app database. She schemed to use the threat as a tool for a corporate promotion. With the help of a newly found confidant and ally, Serge starts digging to be soon confronted with a strong resistance, which could mean only one thing — they must be on the right track.

As the chase after shadowy secrets of the modern IT industry fastens and the mist in noir tiny streets of Barcelona thickens, Serge loses control over demons from his past. Under pressure and emotional tension, the two women — the one he once lost and the one whom he's about to lose if they don't solve the murderous conspiracy — blend into one. But this time everything will be different, Serge knows he will fight against the whole world but will not let the woman of his dreams abandon him again.

The second novel by Nazarova allows naming the author's trademark narrative manners — the defeated expectancy and completely unpredictable plot twists. What starts as a slowburning corporate thriller gradually transforms into an urban city noir to a sweeping road story and, eventually, the rollercoaster of a psycho thriller. Valentina Nazarova masters at keeping readers aghast at each new turn of the novel's page.

**Clever publishers**

Novel, 2020
382 pp

Audio book rights sold

Storytel Original audio series, 8x50min

Film rights sold**TV series under development**

The Ritual

Imagine DARK/The OA in the world of the Russian North where civilization and native mythology meet to create a grim, twisted, mind-bending thriller with a coming-of-age/identity crisis drama at its core.

A small town in the primeval forests of Karelia. The mine that provided the whole town with jobs has shut down, and it is only a question of time before the whole settlement will be abandoned. A group of teens come up together to perform a mock ritual on a sacred stone of Saami, the native people of Karelia. During the ritual the friends quarrel, and a girl ironically spells a curse on the others, asking the ancient demons of the woods to take her away from this place no matter how high the price of her wish might be. However, a bad joke turns out to be a true nightmare. Every teen involved in the ritual dies within a few years, one by one.

Nastya, who made a curse, seems to be unaware — she fled the town soon after the ritual and moved to St. Petersburg to start a new life and never come back. In St. Petersburg, Nastya studies creative writing at the university and works at a coffee shop as many other students do. But deep within her she is terrified that she might repeat the story of her mother, whose schizophrenia landed her in a clinic. Was it really a schizophrenia or a 'polar psychosis', a weird form of mysterious possession inherent to the native peoples of the Russian North?

Misha (17) is a half-blood: his mother is Russian, and the father he hardly remembers is Saami. Since birth, he feels an outcast for Russians and Saami alike, mocked by fellow kids and even by his elder brother, Petya. When the rite happens, Petya makes his little brother go away, so Misha doesn't witness what happened there. But when he finds his brother's body in the woods (official investigation comes to the conclusion that wolves are to blame, but locals know — no

wolves have been noticed in the neighborhood for years) Misha realizes that he and Nastya are the only ones who survived three years after the ritual. Nastya should be the key, so Misha heads to St. Petersburg to bring Nastya back and find ways to stop the curse. When the ghosts from Nastya's past show up in St Petersburg, the girl has to face questions she has been avoiding for so long. Nastya has to find out if she's 'psychotic' or if her body has actually been taken away from her by a demon. Or maybe she's just a scared girl who fights the consequences of trauma she'd been supplanting so fiercely that she managed to forget it at all. But forgetting does not equal overcoming. Nastya will return to the Stone and find out what really happened there.



About the author:

MIKE OMER is an internationally bestselling author renowned for his crime, thriller, horror, and fantasy novels. His notable works include the Zoe Bentley mystery series, the Abby Mullen series, The Glenmore Park mystery series and The Dark Fae FBI romantasy series, co-written with C.N Crawford, under the pen name Alex Rivers.

Omer's books have been translated into over 20 languages and have sold more than 2.5 million copies worldwide. He is a New York Times and Washington Post bestselling author and wrote the second most-read Kindle book of 2018. His accolades include the LiveLib Readers' Choice Award for Detective Fiction in 2020 and 2023, and the Thomas and Mercer Silver Raven Award.

In February 2024, a TV series adaptation of his novel A Killer's Mind was released on the streaming service Kinopoisk. Farborgen School for Gifted Children is Omer's first adventure fantasy book for young readers.

Selected Bibliography

2025 — **Farborgen School for Gifted Children**, *series*

2017-2024 — **Dark Fae FBI**, *series*

2021-2022 — **Abby Mullen**, *series*

2018-2020 — **Zoe Bentley**, *series*

2016 — **Glenmore Park**, *series*

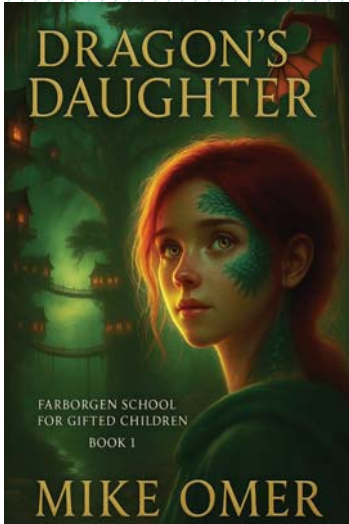
Awards

LiveLib Readers' Choice Award for Detective Fiction 2023

LiveLib Readers' Choice Award for Detective Fiction 2020

Thomas and Mercer Silver Raven Award 2018

YA Fantasy Series



Novel, YA fantasy series
Book 1 in a series, 2025
89 636 words

Translation rights
Hungarian Libri (2-book deal, pre-empt)
Slovak Ikar (2-book deal)
Russian Exem (3-book deal, preempt)

Original English
manuscript

Farborgen School for Gifted Children: Dragon's Daughter

The New York Times and Washington Post bestselling author of gripping mystery thrillers ventures into the realm of young adult adventure fiction — making a bold and compelling claim for success. Wednesday meets His Dark Materials in Mike Omer's new book that masterfully blends adventure, wit, and emotional depth.

When eleven-year-old Chloe Maddox hiccups smoke one day, she's shocked to learn she's half-dragon — thrusting her into a thrilling world of magic, danger, and self-discovery.

Chloe Maddox, eleven years old, has learned to keep her head down in the Loving Care Group Home, a bleak New York institution — which, despite its name, lacks love and care. Orphaned and stuck in this dreary place, she's gotten good at blending in. But when her hiccups suddenly start releasing smoke, she realizes she might be a little more special than she thought.

A peek at her file reveals a mysteriously blacked-out family history, with one odd line suggesting she might not be entirely human. Chloe dismisses it as pure nonsense — until the next day, when Vera Ingram, a recruiter for Farborgen School for Gifted Children, shows up to drop a bombshell: Chloe's father was a dragon. Dragons are nearly extinct, and Chloe is the only half-dragon in the world. Worse, an organization is hunting her to exploit her dragon abilities.

Vera offers Chloe an escape: come to Farborgen, where she'll be safe and learn to control her powers. Chloe, eager to leave the cold, uncaring group home behind, agrees.

At Farborgen, Chloe discovers a world she never could've imagined. Hidden inside a run-down sock factory is a magical forest, with treehouse classrooms and students who look human but definitely aren't. Chloe meets her roommates: an ogre girl, an under-the-bed monster, Ryan, a mischievous imp spinning tales, and Jayla, a fae obsessed with technology. It's strange, but Chloe can't help feeling at home.

However, things aren't perfect. Chloe learns that she needs to master her dragon abilities before she loses control and accidentally burns down the school. Worse, if her dragon side is exposed, the people hunting her will come after her — and everyone she cares about.

Chloe uncovers a deeper mystery when she finds a dragon caged in a secret lab at the rival Nithercott Business School. Turns out, Nithercott is run by the same organization that's after Chloe, and they've been capturing magical creatures for years. And the dragon in the cage? Chloe's half-brother.

With the help of her friends — Jayla, who's an expert hacker, and Ryan, who claims to be a dragon but isn't — Chloe hatches a plan to rescue him. But things go awry quickly, and Chloe soon finds herself in deadly danger.

Ultimately, Chloe must face her fears, embrace her dragon powers, save her half-brother, and find her true self.

Farborgen School for Gifted Children sees Mike Omer put a fresh spin on the magical-school trope — set in a high-tech world where magic and modernity coexist, and the greatest threats wear business suits. Written with wit, empathy, and a vivid imagination, this captivating fantasy series will resonate with young readers worldwide.

Author's combined sales
over 2,5 mln copies



About the author:

LUDMILLA PETRUSHEVSKAYA was born in Moscow in 1938. Petrushevskaya studied journalism at Moscow State University, and began writing prose in the mid '60s. Her first work was published in 1972, only to be followed by almost ten years of officially enforced silence, when the publication of her plays and prose was forbidden. At that time Petrushevskaya earned her living by working as a radio and television journalist and contributing to newspapers and literary magazines. When her somber and disturbing absurdist plays were finally staged, Ludmilla Petrushevskaya became widely recognized as one of Russia's finest playwrights. A collection of short stories and monologues, *Immortal Love*, was published in 1988 and met with stunning success among readers and critics alike. In 1992 Petrushevskaya's novel *The Time Is Night* was short-listed for the Russian Booker Prize; it was translated into more than 30 languages and included in college courses as one of the most important novels of the 20th century. Since then, Petrushevskaya has published over 30 books of prose. Today, award-winning plays by Petrushevskaya are produced around the world, while her prose pieces have been published in more than 30 countries. Ludmila Petrushevskaya is considered to be the only indisputably canonical writer currently at work in Russia today. Ludmilla Petrushevskaya's recent publications have established her reputation with a new generation of readers as a master of the mystical thriller and short stories of magical realism. The New York Times bestseller *There Once Lived a Woman Who Tried to Kill Her Neighbor's Baby: Scary Fairy Tales* (published by Penguin in 2010) won the World Fantasy Award and was one of New York magazine's Ten Best Books of the Year and one of NPR's Five Best Works of Foreign Fiction.

In 1991, Petrushevskaya was awarded the Pushkin Prize by the Alfred Toepfer Foundation in Germany. She has also received prizes from the leading literary journals in Russia. Petrushevskaya's novels *The Time Is Night* and *Number One...* were short-listed for the Russian Booker Prize. In 2002, Petrushevskaya received Russia's most prestigious prize, *The Triumph*, for lifetime achievement. Petrushevskaya's play *Bifem* was awarded the first prize at the New Drama Festival in 2003. In 2003 Ludmilla Petrushevskaya was awarded the State Prize of Russian Federation, in November 2021 Petrushevskaya publicly turned down this prize in protest against an imposed closure of The Memorial human rights organization. The World Fantasy Award was received in 2010 for the short stories collection published by Penguin in USA. In 2018 Petrushevskaya received The Big Book Award for life-time achievement, in 2019 the author was awarded New Literature Award (NOS), in critics' choice nomination. The national drama recognition award The Golden Mask has been awarded to Petrushevskaya in 2020 for life-time achievement. In 2022 Petrushevskaya continued to reside in Russia while fearlessly and severely protesting against dictatorship.

Selected Bibliography

2022 — **Queen Lear. Magical Tales**, *short stories*

2020 — **The Wedding Night, or May 37th**, *plays*

2017 — **Kidnapped. A Story in Crimes**, *novel*

2017 — **Travels on the Occasion of Death**, *a novella, short stories*

2013 — **There Once Lived a Girl Who Seduced Her Sister's Husband and He Hanged Himself**, *short stories*

2010 — **There Once Lived a Woman Who Tried to Kill Her Neighbor's Baby**, *short stories*

2006 — **The Little Girl from the Metropol**, *autobiography*

2004 — **Number One or in the Gardens of Other Possibilities**, *novel*

2002 — **A Black Coat**, *short stories*

2002, 2015 — **Piglet Pyotr**, *children's picture books*

1999 — **Real-Life Tales**, *short stories*

1996 — **The Collected Works** (5 volumes)

1992 — **The Time Is Night**, *novel*

1988 — **Immortal Love**, *short stories*



Complete list of prizes and awards

The Pushkin Prize by the **Alfred Toepfer Foundation 1991** (Germany)

Shortlisted for the **Russian Booker Prize 1992**

The Triumph Prize 2002

The New Drama Festival (first prize) **2003**

The State Prize of the Russian Federation 2003

Shortlisted for the **Russian Booker Prize 2004**

The Gogol Prize 2008

The Bunin Prize 2008

The World Fantasy Award 2010 (USA)

Finalist of **The National Book Critics Circle Award 2017** (USA)

The Big Book Award 2018 (for the life-time achievement)

The New Literature Award 2018 (Critics' Choice)

The Golden Mask Award 2020 (for the life-time achievement)



Selected quotes

One of Russia's best living writers.

The New York Times

We are likely to hear a lot more of his woman. Some October, perhaps, from the Nobel Prize committee.

Nation

Petrushevskaya is a strikingly original author.

The Guardian

In her best work Petrushevskaya steers a sure course between neutrally recording the degraded life of the Soviet-era urban underclass and ratcheting up the squalor of that life for the mere pleasure of it. She does so by the steadiness of her moral compass and the gaiety of her prose.

J. M. Coetzee

winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature

Thrillingly strange... Brilliantly disturbing... proves that the literary tradition that produces Dostoevsky, Gogol, and Babel is alive and well... Petrushevskaya writes instant classics.

The Daily Beast

Petrushevskaya is the Tolstoy of the communal kitchen... She is not, like Tolstoy, writing of war, or, like Dostoevsky, writing of criminals on the street, or, like poet Anna Akhmatova or novelist Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, noting the extreme suffering of those sent to the camps. Rather, she is bearing witness to the fight to survive the everyday... [She is] dazzlingly talented and deeply empathetic.

Slate

The writing is beautifully controlled and the spirit large... She deserves a wide readership.

TLS

...a strong talent.

Kirkus Review

The auras of Samuel Beckett and the baleful Albanian magic realist Ismail Kadare blend in Petrushevskaya's work.

Booklist

Finalist of **The National Book Critics Circle Award 2017 (USA)****The Gogol Prize 2008**Longlisted for the **National Bestseller Prize 2007****Amphora**An autobiographical novel, 2006
103 pp*Translation rights sold*

English (US) Penguin
 French Christian Bourgois
 Lithuanian Vaga
 Romanian Meteor
 German Schoeffling
 Italian Brioschi Editore
 Arabic Almada Group
 Portuguese (Brazil) Companhia das Letras
 Simplified Chinese Shanghai Readers' Culture
 Czech Pistorious&Olshanska
 Malayalam (India) Green Books
 Turkish Fol Kitap

Complete
English translation
available

The Little Girl from the Metropol

This is not a typical fiction memoir. Through the prism of the story of her family, Ludmilla Petrushevskaya draws a compelling portrait of the era of communist Russia.

With brilliant precision and telling details, Petrushevskaya draws a gallery of portraits of the Muscovite intelligentsia as they struggle to survive in the new-pov-erty-stricken and ignorant-country. The author recalls her beautiful grandmother, whom the poet Vladimir Mayakovsky was in love with; her great-aunt, lover of head-of-state Mikhail Kalinin; and her grandfather, a celebrated linguist, one of the fathers of the Moscow linguistic circle. These characters are set next to violent and ruthless neighbors who attack Ludmilla's grandmother with an axe when she wants to use the bathroom in their communal flat, and beat Ludmilla if she is found rummaging in their slop-pail for the remains of

food. The 8-year-old girl grows up in the company of fatherless boys, homeless beggars and war invalids that crowded the streets of Saratov (then Kuibyshev), where her family lived as evacuees during the war. As the story of a small girl in the hungry post-war years unfolds, the fate of the enormous country appears before the reader — a country where the magical is intertwined with the mundane, beautiful and refined neighbor with terrible ones, and despair with hope. A family forest grows out of Petrushevskaya's memoir, one in which each tree is at once "a child, a parent, and a personality."

Selected quotes

Powerful... Like a stained-glass Chagall window, Petrushevskaya's Soviet-era memoir creates a larger panorama out of tiny, vivid chapters, shattered fragments of different color and shape... [It] brings to mind Auden's famous words about Yeats: 'Mad Ireland hurt him into poetry.' This memoir shows us how Soviet life hurt Ludmilla Petrushevskaya into crystalline prose.

The New York Times Book Review

[An] extraordinary memoir... Lively, bold, iconoclastic... [Petrushevskaya] has succeeded Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn as the country's greatest writer and authentic moral voice.

Orlando Figes

The New York Review of Books

A gritty, surprisingly disarming portrait of the grim Stalinist era.

BBC

"Ten Books You Should Read in February"

Devastating, unjudgmental, and curiously uplifting, the memoir is a profound testament to the power of the creative, loving human spirit to vanquish brutal circumstance... The stories she tells... show a girl of unerodable pride and defiant character, intent on finding joy.

The Christian Science Monitor

Petrushevskaya is blessed with good material... [Her] sunny outlook seems all the more remarkable as we learn more details of her childhood, some of which might read as straight out of the Brothers Grimm... A preternaturally nimble and resourceful heroine, she keeps emerging unscathed... Her memoir has the fairy-tale ending its plucky heroine deserves.

Bookforum

Biting but beautiful, it's an autobiography that says much about the world both then and now.

Refinery29

A well-crafted glimpse into the past of one of Russia's most intriguing writers... Spare, often darkly humorous... Many memories have a touch of the magic Petrushevskaya includes in her fiction... Her perspective is decidedly original.

BookPage

A terse, spirited memoir that reads like a picaresque novel... Lively, irreverent... With spunk and defiance, [Petrushevskaya] survived, and transcended, the privations of her youth.

Kirkus Reviews

A blend of dark humor and clipped, piercing realism... Petrushevskaya is the definition of incorrigible and indomitable, both on the page and in her life.

Publishers Weekly

The New Literature Award 2017 (critics' choice)



Eksmo

Novel, 2017

320 pp

Translation rights sold

World English Deep Vellum

Turkish Fol Kitap

Norwegian Solum

Macedonian Antolog

Bulgarian Colibri

Danish Silkefyret

Hungarian Typotex

 Complete
English translation
available

Kidnapped. A Story in Crimes

Ludmilla Petrushevskaya, Russia's greatest living absurdist and surrealist writer, The New York Times bestselling and The World Fantasy Award winning author of scary fairy-tales, has written a traditional family drama meet a burlesque social satire, enveloped in a Bollywood soap-opera plot.

Set in the 1980s through 1990s, the novel focuses on the life of Alina, 21y.o., a promising language student who has to drop her academic career because of an unplanned pregnancy. Alina decides to give up a baby for adoption after birth and is set to leave the hospital alone. In the hospital she meets another girl, Masha, a graduate from the Moscow Institute of Foreign Affairs, who is happily looking forward to the childbirth and speaks up of her life plans with the husband, Sergei, (he, too, is a future diplomat) in a republic in South Asia. Their family has been chosen for work in the Soviet trade mission there — a fantastic career for young specialists.

Masha dies in childbirth, and Alina who delivers her baby at the same time, on an impulse exchanges bracelets with newborns' names between the babies — she wishes a brighter future for her own son, and believes that the widowed father will still take the baby along abroad, away from the dull Soviet reality. By then Alina feels connected with her baby and feels sorry for Masha's newborn son, and she agrees to breastfeed both babies while in the hospital. Soon Alina is told that her boy died from infection, but she is the only one who knows that her son is alive, since she exchanged the names bracelets. What she does not know, however, is that the baby did not die as reported — the management in the hospital have long worked out a scheme to ease the trade of babies left for adoption — and that the buyer chose her boy (listed as Masha's son) and the management unscrupulously exchanged the bracelets with names again.

Sergei is devastated, Masha's death puts his career plans on threat — only married couples enlist for a foreign service. He approaches Alina with an offer to take

over his dead wife's identity and to travel together with his baby. Alina, who is certain that Sergei's son is her own biological baby, agrees. She cannot even imagine what the future has in stock for her — there will be sexual and physical abuse from the spiteful factitious husband; survival against all odds in unthinkable circumstances in the strange country; a miraculous reunion with her own son in Moscow; struggling for living with two kids and without income or work in the turbulent 1990s. What Alina is certain about when she accepts Sergei's unscrupulous offer is that she will learn to be a good mother.

Petrushevskaya's impeccable style reaches its heights in the writer's chef-d'oeuvre. The author's exceptional command in rendering direct speech of her characters fills archetypal heroes with life and volume, while the high-pitch tension involves readers to otherwise stereotypical, if not trite, conflicts. The flamboyant cast of characters — girls who blackmail their future husbands with pregnancy; a father-in-law who banishes newlyweds in case they might claim rights for a flat in Moscow; a husband who is ready to exchange his dead wife for a stranger for the career's sake; staff of maternity hospital who trade children left for adoption, documenting them as dead; a whimsical elderly lady who falls in love with an old handicapped genius artist; Alina's former college mates with their lovers; Sergei's driver building his private paradise in an offshore country and his wife, nicknamed Kustodiev, with a certainly distinguished figure — they all form a grand choir singing a hymn to the motherhood, a driving force of Petrushevskaya's universe, where everyone is a criminal and a victim, and the author feels compassion for each.

Selected quotes

The best novel of the year, in every page there's more wit and talent than in the whole contemporary Russian prose, everyone forgive me. Written with much physiology, humor, the novel is at times scaring, always fascinating and precise from a playwright's perspective.

Dmitry Bykov

the nationally-awarded author of *The Living Souls*

The scope is epic — the world of Petrushevskaya has no division between important and secondary events, main characters and the rest; each character is measured in scale of fate, the light from cosmos flowing equally though everyone <...> The new moment in this apotheosis of the "matrarchy" is that the great mother, the main hero in Petrushevskaya's fiction, includes this time both mothers and grandmothers who save other's children not only from death but also from the orphanhood.

colta.ru

Kidnapped is an inventive novel — a hymn to building a family on one's own terms, whatever form that family takes.

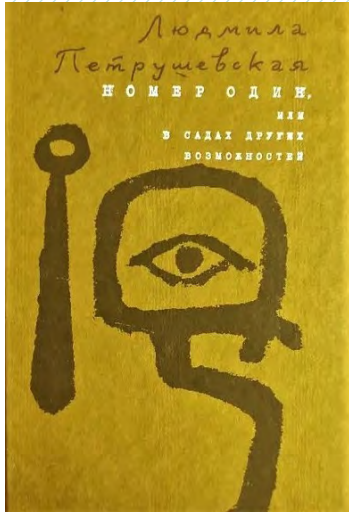
Foreword Reviews

...there's plenty of cutting satire of corruption in late- and post-Soviet Russia. This irreverent and absurdist outing will keep readers guessing to the very end.

Publisher's Weekly

Kidnapped is a cold war soap opera par excellence, replete with spies, Angolan freedom fighters, and student dormitories filled with the many nationalities of the Soviet Union. <...> Bipolar or multipolar, it is still a man's world. People are still just schemers and strivers, Petrushevskaya tells us, claiming whatever and whomever they want as their own. Such stark, sobering truths are not incompatible with a happy ending.

NYRB



Eksmo
Novel, 2004
336 pp

Translation rights sold
Polish Bertelsmann

Number One, or in the Gardens of Other Possibilities

This rich and complex Cajun brew of a novel from “one of Russia’s best living writers” (The New York Times) opens up new textual realms — a true feast for Petrushevskaya’s devoted readers and inquisitive minds alike.

The bullet-paced, breathtaking narrative opens with a brilliantly rendered dialogue between a research fellow (Number One) and the director of an ethnographic research institute (Number Two). Ivan (Number One), an underpaid, enthusiastic scientist, father of a handicapped child and clandestine creator of a computer game called *In The Gardens of Other Possibilities*, reports the results of his last expedition to the settlements of the nearly extinct Antti people, whose beliefs and myths merit international scientific attention. Number One plays a recording of the incantations of the powerful shaman of the Antti, who is an adept in the transmigration of souls and knows the way to the evil world of the dead. Ivan has to persuade the director to find 5,000 US dollars in ransom money for his colleague Kukharev, kidnapped during the expedition. Ivan fails to return to the settlement with the money — he is robbed, and the violent pursuit of the thieves ends in the double murder of Ivan and Valery, one of the criminals. Instead of dying, Ivan finds himself in the body of the thief — and in the centre of the grim

reality of the criminal world of Russia’s provinces. As Valery’s body suppresses the consciousness of the intellectual researcher and determines Ivan’s actions, the intricately concocted story escalates into a blood-curdling thriller.

Petrushevskaya’s unsurpassed mastery in rendering the linguistic personalities of the intellectual and the thief, and the dense, concentrated narrative that is the author’s signature technique, open up new textual realms. In the fictional world of Petrushevskaya, the boundaries between the real and the surreal, between everyday existence and the reality of a computer game, are blurred, and her heroes wander along the “forked paths” in the “gardens of other possibilities” that spiral into endless limbos of personal and social hells in modern Russia. The author brilliantly masters the shifts between an absurdist play through mystical thriller to social drama, putting forward the ontological oppositions of body vs. soul, living vs. being, and drawing a compelling portrait of an almost-extinct Russian intelligentsia.

Selected quotes

The reader’s perception of the text is intentionally frustrated; the brilliant narrative technique confronts and confounds (in a Joycean manner) us. <...> The concentration of the macabre surpasses everything previously published in Russia.

Russian Journal

A text of frenzied energy and passion. <...> One of the brightest literary events of the year.

ej.ru

This is the unpredictable and harrowing story of a soul that travels between bodies and at the same time tries to solve its numerous problems.

Private Time Magazine

Petrushevskaya prepares her plot with a dissector’s precision.

Afisha

Petrushevskaya has conveyed the nightmare of identity and the question “Who am I?” hanging in mid-air, unanswered, with consummate skill, in the best traditions of David Lynch.

Vash Dosug

In Number One the evil is not the private prerogative of a single person — it becomes a common denominator of life.

Itogi Magazine

The World Fantasy Award 2010

One of The New York magazine's 10 Best Books of the Year 2009

One of NPR's 5 Best Works of Foreign Fiction 2009

The New York Times
Bestseller
Amazon.com Bestseller
in translated fiction**Penguin Books**English language edition
Short stories, 2009
224 pp

Russian editions

AST, 2011; Alpina Prose, 2022

Translation rights soldWorld English Penguin
German Bloomsbury Berlin
French Christian Bourgois
Spanish Atalanta
Italian Einaudi
Portuguese (Brazil) Companhia das Letras
Norwegian Cappelen Damm
Danish Vandkunsten
Chinese simplified characters Shanghai 99 Culture Consulting
Romanian Meteor Press
Estonian Tõnapäev
Turkish Jaguar
Japanese Kawade Shobo Shinsha
Serbian Solaris
Korean Sigongsa
Czech Větrné mlýny
Macedonian Ili Ili
Hungarian Typotex
Armenian Vogt Nairi
Dutch De Geus
Bulgarian Prozorets
Albanian Ombra
Malayalam (India) Saikatham
Croatian Hangar 7Full English, French,
German translations
available

There Once Lived a Woman Who Tried to Kill Her Neighbors' Baby

A master of the short story genre, heir to the spellbinding tradition of Poe and Gogol, Ludmilla Petrushevskaya dazzles the imagination with explorations of death, love, space, time and identity. This is an invitation to travel along a "shadowy borderland between reality and nightmare", one not to resist.

In her mystical scary stories that at once recall Kafka, Borges and Gogol, Petrushevskaya pictures the deprived and desperate — orphans, childless women, lonely elderly people — in search of love and happiness, in their struggle for life. The fantastic (magical transformations, resurrection of the dead, living dolls and magical objects) merges here into reality, authentically captured by the author. Petrushevskaya's signature prose, harrowing and painfully sensitive, seems to strip off your skin, making your naked nerves shudder at the touch of this fictional reality that is much too close for comfort.

Here is a childless woman who grows a girl in a cabbage (The Cabbage-Patch Mother), or a girl attempts suicide and finds herself in a horrid, unit apartment building chased by monstrous lorry drivers, escaping a split second before it is too late to come back to life (A Black Coat). There are frighteningly prophetic stories on pandemic extreme aftermath (Hygiene, The New Family Robinson).

Set against a bleak background, Petrushevskaya's "fairy-tales for grownups", as the author defines the genre, are amazingly dynamic and ingenious.

Selected quotes

One of Russia's best living writers... Every one of the 19 stories in Petrushevskaya's *There Once Lived a Woman Who Tried to Kill Her Neighbor's Baby* presents an arresting parable of this kind. Timeless and troubling, these "scary fairy tales" grapple with accidents of fate and weaknesses of human nature that exact a heavy penance. Short, highly concentrated, inventive and disturbing, her tales inhabit a borderline between this world and the next, a place where vengeance and grace may be achieved only in dreams.

The New York Times Book Review

Simply put, these stories are incredibly weird. But they linger in the mind as unsolvable puzzles: mysterious and undeniably seductive.

More magazine

These stories work the boundary states of consciousness — between sleep and waking, hallucination and realization, life and death — like a tongue works an aching tooth. You never know where you are or where you're going, because the ground beneath the narratives is constantly shifting. You know only that the world you are in is as bleak as Beckett, as astringent as witch hazel, as poetic as your finest private passing moments.

Elle magazine

Arresting... Incantatory... Timeless and troubling...

This exquisite collection [is] vital, eerie and freighted with the moral messages that attend all cautionary tales... [Petrushevskaya] is hailed as one of Russia's best living writers. This slim volume shows why. Again and again, in surprisingly few words, her witchy magic foment an unsettling brew of conscience and consequences.

The New York Times Book Review

The book could catch fire in your hands and you'd still try to be turning pages. It's giving me nightmares, in the nicest way possible.

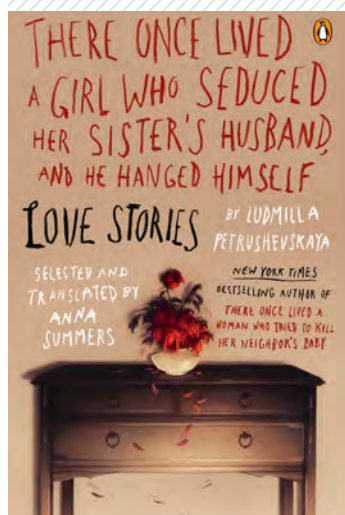
*Jessica Crispin
Bookslut*

Thrillingly strange... Brilliantly disturbing... The fact that Ludmilla Petrushevskaya is Russia's premier writer of fiction today proves that the literary tradition that produced Dostoyevsky, Gogol, and Babel is alive and well.

*Taylor Antrim
The Daily Beast*

What distinguishes the author is her compression of language, her use of detail and her powerful visual sense... Petrushevskaya is certainly a writer of particular gifts.

Time Out New York

**Penguin Books**

English edition
Short stories, 2013
192 pp

Russian editions:
AST, 2010; Alpina, 2022

Translation rights sold

World English Penguin
German Bloomsbury Berlin
Romanian Editura Polirom
Portuguese (Brazil) Editora Schwarcz
Danish Sylkefyret
Spanish Marbot Ediciones
Catalan Periscopi
Norwegian Solum
Hebrew Locus

Complete
English translation
available

There Once Lived a Girl Who Seduced Her Sister's Husband, and He Hanged Himself: Love Stories

By turns sly and sweet, burlesque and heartbreaking, these realist fables of women looking for love are the stories that Ludmilla Petrushevskaya — who has been compared to Chekhov, Tolstoy, Beckett, Poe, Angela Carter, and even Stephen King — is best known for in Russia.

These “love stories, with a twist” follow the New York Times bestselling collection of her mystical short stories *There Once Lived a Woman Who Tried to Kill Her Neighbor's Baby*. The publisher's blurb says, “here are attempts at human connection, both depraved and sublime, by people across the life span: one-night stands in communal apartments, poignantly awkward couplings, office trysts, schoolgirl crushes, elopements, tentative courtships, and rampant infidel-

ity, shot through with lurid violence, romantic illusion, and surprising tenderness.”

With a satirical eye and deep sympathy for her characters, Petrushevskaya blends macabre spectacle with transformative moments of grace and shows just why she is Russia's preeminent contemporary fiction writer.

Selected quotes

They are deeply unromantic stories told frankly, with an elasticity and economy of language. <...> What is consistent is the dark, fatalistic humor and bone-deep irony Petrushevskaya's characters employ as protection against the biting cold of loneliness and misfortune that seems their birthright. <...> They may not have the heart to throw the bastards out or lock the door against them, but these women hold the keys.

The New York Times Book Review

This gem's exquisite conjugation of doom and disconnect is so depressingly convincing that I laughed out loud.

Elle magazine

The length of this collection's title is in inverse proportion to the brevity of the stories, a contrast neatly reflecting Petrushevskaya's covert but stinging irony... The scouring realism showcased here in 17 works spanning her long writing life is the narrative mode that made her famous and led to her being banned in her native Russia. These strange, violent, and devastating stories of love warped by poverty, anger, and pain embody the Soviet era's soul-starving shortages of dignity, shelter, and freedom. Petrushevskaya's afflicted characters are trapped in wretchedly crowded communal apartments and suffocating family configurations, bereft of privacy, comfort, and hope. Out of misery coalesce the weirdest and most warped of romances, some disastrous, some grotesque, some

liberating, while mothers' love for their children brightens an absurdly cruel world. Petrushevskaya's phenomenal skill in coaxing radiance from resignation, courage from despair, makes for universal and timeless stories of piercing condemnation, sly humor, profound yearning, and transforming compassion.

Donna Seaman
for *Booklist*

Dark and mischievous... [Petrushevskaya's] stories never flinch from harshness, yet also offer odd redemptions... comedic brilliance... microscopic precision... several inimitable, laugh-out-loud paragraphs... creepy early-Ian-McEwan style identity disintegrations [and a] formidable way with a character profile... Petrushevskaya... ensures herself a place high in the roster of unsettling Writers of the Weird.

Locus

Both supremely gritty and realistically life-affirming... Full of meaningful, finely crafted detail.

Publishers Weekly

Think Chekhov writing from a female perspective... Petrushevskaya's short stories transform the mundane into the near surreal, pausing only to wink at the absurdity of it all.

Kirkus Reviews



About the author:

IVAN PHILIPPOV, born in 1982 in Moscow, is a Berlin-based writer, journalist, film executive and co-host of a popular podcast. Ivan graduated from a History Faculty of Moscow State University and for seven years worked as a reporter, starting in the news and graduating to writing about entertainment and media industry for Vedomosti at the time a joint-venture of Wall Street Journal and Financial Times. Among many stories published by Ivan Philippov at that time were one on one interviews with public figures from Sheldon Adelson and Bob Iger to Jerry Bruckheimer.

After leaving Vedomosti Ivan Philippov joined Alexander Rodnyansky's CTC Media as the head of corporate PR. For the past 15 years Ivan worked for Mr. Rodnyansky as a creative executive in his US film company AR Content.

As a journalist Ivan Philippov wrote for many Moscow-based publications, including Forbes, GQ and Esquire. Leaving Russia in the first weeks of war for Tbilisi, now he writes for independent Russian media Holod and his op-eds were published in The Guardian in 2022 and 2023. Philippov uses the Telegram social media app as a platform for critical analysis of the torrents of war commentary and propaganda. In Russian, his own channel is called "Na Zzzzapadnom fronte bez peremen", which means "All quiet on the Wwwwestern front". This is a nod to Erich Maria Remarque's 1929 anti-war novel of that title, as well as to the "Z" symbol of militaristic nationalism that has come to the fore during the war in Ukraine. Currently Philippov's channel has nearly 100 000 subscribers on Telegram.

Ivan Philippov has published three books: a non-fiction work on the golden age of modern television and the best TV shows of the past two decades; his debut novel *The Shadow*, successfully adapted into an audio series by Storytel Original and longlisted for the National Bestseller Prize; and his famous *Mouse*, now banned in Russia and enjoying massive international press coverage.

Selected Bibliography

2023 — **Mouse**, *novel*

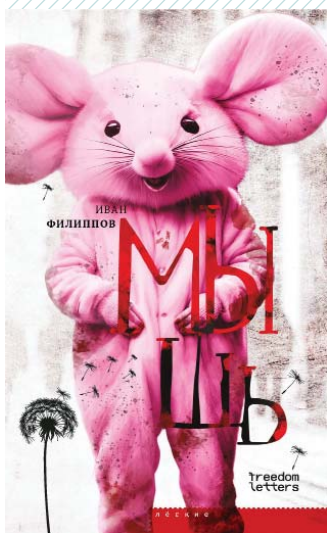
2022 — **The Shadow**, *novel*

2020 — **In the Next Episodes**, *non-fiction*

Awards

Longlisted for the **National Bestseller Prize 2022**

Banned in Russia

**Freedom Letters**

Novel, 2024
78400 words
277 pp

Translation rights

French Editions Blueman
Estonian Sinisukk (auction)
Czech Jota

Audio book rights

Freedom Letters

Complete
English translation
available

Mouse

A blood-curdling quest to escape zombie apocalypse in 2020 Moscow, after Putin's immortality experiment goes awry.

In 2020, an infected mouse escapes from the Institute of Functional Immortality, where technology for Putin's immortality is being developed. This triggers a devastating zombie apocalypse that sweeps through Moscow, leaving a trail of destruction and death. Millions die, and many become zombies. The infected have heightened senses of hearing and smell, but their vision and motor skills are severely impaired, making escape possible, though far from easy.

The story follows three groups of characters: Seva (15) and Kostya (10), two brothers trapped in their apartment after their parents are killed, searching for a way out of the city; Asya, a girl dressed in a full-length pink mouse costume, who is also trying to escape and return to her hometown — finding romance along the way against all odds; and Lavr, an 80-year-old doctor of biological sciences, and his prison guard, Tonya, stuck in a flooded field outside the prison where Lavr is held on charges of treason.

The three groups set off from different parts of the city, all heading in the same direction while trying to escape. The story unfolds through three parallel narratives, each group facing various dangers and challenges. Along the way, they visit the Pushkin Museum, escape from a deranged cannibal, traverse metro

tunnels, climb rooftops, and hijack a train. Eventually, they converge in the final chapter, where their paths intersect and their fates become intertwined.

The novel explores themes of survival, hope, and human connection in the face of adversity, while offering a sharp social critique of contemporary politics through its satirical portrayal of the brutal deaths of prominent political figures.

Banned in Russia as a threat to national security, *The Mouse* has sparked international attention ever since, fueled by the audacity of the ban and Putin's own statements about the pursuit of eternal life.

A bestseller on the underground book market, the novel spread across the internet, and beyond Russia, Philippov became a symbol of the fight for free speech, drawing widespread global media attention.

Press coverage in
The Times, The Guardian, and
more

Selected quotes

The book is a captivating and uncompromisingly genre-true read that keeps the reader hooked until the very end, while remaining unquestionably authentic in its depiction. From the city's toponymy to restaurant interiors, electric train management technology, and the interior design of the Pushkin Museum's rooms, every detail is precise, true, and recognizable. This authenticity turns reading into a pleasure that rivals watching a blockbuster. A very timely book — I wish millions of fellow citizens could read it. It is an outstanding ingredient in the vaccine against rabies.

Alexander Rodnyansky

Ukrainian producer with four Oscar nominations

Ivan Philippov's *Mouse*: A Masterpiece of Freedom and Reflection. With a story that is both gripping and sharp, Philippov denounces, under the guise of fiction, a regime obsessed with control and immortality. Dive into the world of this novel that shakes up the codes and questions the limits between freedom of expression and censorship. Ivan Philippov's *Mouse* is much

more than a zombie novel: it is an ode to freedom and an uncompromising critique of an oppressive system. By mixing suspense, humor and reflection, the author invites us to question our own society and the limits we impose on artistic creation.

Rainfolk's Diaries
France

This is a right book in these hard times. There's much heroic in the text, as the genre requires. And we need heroism today. Moreover, there are many Dostoevskian descriptions of streets, buildings, and even metro stations in the text. To me, who desperately misses Moscow, it was intriguing to read about the city, even if it is being demolished in the book.

Dmitry Nizovtsev
independent journalist

Longlisted for the **National Bestseller Prize 2022**



Inspiria (Eksmo)
2022

Freedom Letters
Novel, 2025
352 pp

Audio rights
Storytel Original

The Shadow

When death is only the beginning. *The Shadow* blends superhero thrills with the dark, violent history of Russia — in the spirit of Neil Gaiman.

On a hot August night, a girl in downtown Moscow is run over by a car. This is not an ordinary hit-and-run, but a premeditated murder. However, the crime is deemed an accident, and an innocent migrant worker is quickly arrested — he was driving a street-sweeping truck on the same street.

Stepan is a Moscow police detective. Far from a hero, he is just an ordinary Russian cop — a little corrupt, indifferent, not outright evil, though perhaps heading that way. His one redeeming quality is his soft spot for girls who fall victim to violent crimes, a sensitivity shaped by his own past. Stepan will easily take a bribe from a drug dealer, but Lord have mercy on any rapist who crosses his path.

Sonya's death worries Stepan, and he sets out to find the truth, ignoring the violent objections and direct orders of his superior officer not to investigate. He quickly realizes he will lose his job if he persists, but before he can admit defeat and fall in line, Stepan is gunned down by two of his fellow officers, and his body is thrown into a sewage well.

This is how the story begins. Stepan finds himself in The Other Moscow — the so-called subMoscow, where all the unclaimed dead of the city's 900-year history reside. But Stepan is no ordinary deceased; he was chosen by the City as a Champion. Not unlike a huge prehistoric animal, the City can sense danger. Though it does not know its source, it selects a Champion

— someone who will locate and neutralize the threat. The chosen Champion is known as The Shadow. As a reward, the City grants The Shadow a chance at redemption, a chance to avoid hell. It also bestows a superpower — the ability to inhabit shadows.

Stepan soon realizes that death has brought him true freedom. He no longer has desires, he no longer has to play by anyone's rules — he can be himself. With grim satisfaction, Stepan agrees that a dead cop is a good cop. And now, this good cop will find the people responsible for his death — and, while he's at it, save the city.

Each chapter of *The Shadow* begins with a brief story of a violent death that occurred in Moscow: a six-year-old Polish girl beheaded during the 1606 Moscow uprising; an elderly man shot and killed by an APC near Ostankinskaya Television Tower in 1993; a wealthy American murdered for disrespecting a Black club owner in 1915; the instigator of a plague riot shot by soldiers in Red Square. Not just people — every building here is part of history, and each will play a role in Stepan's quest to protect the city from the deadly plans of a maniac in power.

While the tone is always gripping and entertaining, the novel addresses important issues of modern Moscow, from racism, discrimination, financial inequality, and gender inequality to domestic violence, police and state corruption — and evil personified ruling the land.

Selected quotes

The author's background in history studies finds its way in the world and heroes of the novel.

Labirinth

There is Mitya, the oracle, who connects the two worlds; a group of subway constructors having grown into one entity; Saint Basil's Cathedral turned into a Gaudi-style utopian building in Other Moscow... Readers find numerous dreamlike visual discoveries in the spirit of Gaiman and Melville in the text.

Afisha Daily

Ivan Philippov has a masterly command of film production methods, which results in this fascinating story with a range of interweaving storylines from different periods of Moscow's history that tie together in a grand finale.

Antenna Daily

This novel is written by a Muscovite who loves his city and knows its history very well. Philippov integrates unfamiliar contexts into a swift, modern and daring narrative, and does this with mastery, ease and wit. To read Philippov's *Shadow* is a pure and not useless pleasure.

Alexander Rodnyansky
film producer



About the author:

EDWARD REZNIK (born 1960) is a screenwriter and playwright with twenty feature films and TV series to his name, including the award-winning German-Ukrainian-Russian co-production *4 Days in May* (2011). He writes for theatre, radio, and film. *Therapy* is his first work of fiction, drawing on his ten years of experience as a practicing counselor. Reznik adapted *Therapy* into a feature screenplay that was recognized in the Best Script category at film festivals in Berlin, Toronto, Amsterdam, Los Angeles, Tel Aviv, and Chicago. Edward Reznik lives with his family in New York.

Selected Bibliography

2022 — **Therapy**, *novel*

Awards

Winner of **Best Script Award** at Berlin, Toronto, Amsterdam, Los Angeles, Tel Aviv, and Chicago film festivals

Shoah drama



Eksmo
Novel, 2022
480 pp

Translation rights
All rights available

**Complete English
translation
available**

Therapy

The Sopranos meets Persian Lessons in this highly pitched Bildungsroman set against the horror of the Nazi past. A Jewish psychologist in pre-war Berlin saves a young German from suicide and offers free treatment to help the young man discover his new, self-confident self. After gaining the desired confidence, the young man becomes a member of the SS and ends up as a security guard in the same concentration camp where the psychologist and his family are being held. It is now up to the psychologist to test the effectiveness of his skills and will by helping his patient regain his mental health in the face of the hell of the Shoah. Reznik draws on his ten years of experience as a practicing psychologist to explore the challenges of a young person coming of age in apocalyptic times.

Berlin, 1933. Richard, 19 years old, is plodding through a dull, lonely life, working shifts as a labourer in a fish factory and as an assistant at a hospital morgue. While donating blood to earn some extra money, Richard meets Aida, who has the same rare blood type. The next day Richard visits the psychoanalyst Joachim, who happens to have recently prevented Richard from committing suicide. Joachim knows that Richard cannot afford to pay for his sessions, but he feels a duty to help suicidal patients and offers to treat Richard for free. Richard blames himself for his mother's suicide and feels an obligation to share his mother's fate. Joachim tries to help Richard free himself from the heavy psychological legacy of his mother and gain self-confidence.

At a therapy session, Richard meets Joachim's daughter by chance – she turns out to be Aida. Unbeknownst to her father, Richard takes Aida to a movie and then arranges a nocturnal excursion to the morgue where he works. However, self-doubt and an internal ban on happiness prevent Richard from developing a relationship with Aida – he breaks up with her.

Ulrich, an influential German official, brings his son Theo to Joachim's office for treatment: Theo displays a romantic interest in men, which is both a cause for criminal persecution and a threat to the father's career. Joachim agrees to help Theo, and he does: after reconfirming his sexual inclinations, Theo leaves for Hamburg and finds a lover. There, members of the youth wing of the SS burst into their hotel room, photograph the couple, and arrest them. The furious Ulrich blames the incident on the psychoanalyst; he will ensure Joachim is deprived of the right to practice in Germany.

Prompted by Joachim during therapy, Richard seeks out his father, who turns out to be Ulrich. The high-ranking SS official promotes his illegitimate son in the Nazi hierarchy. Through his father's support, Richard seems to have gained what he needs: inclusion in a large and powerful structure, good money, recognition, and a purpose in life. Richard no longer considers psychotherapy necessary, so he cancels his future appointments with Joachim but resumes his relationship with Aida. Together they move into a new apartment that Richard receives as an SS officer. In public, Aida, unlike her parents,

refuses to act as a Jew – she does not wear a six-pointed yellow star, feeling shielded by Richard's status. At parties, she feels as German as other girls, enjoying the happiness of a young woman in love.

Obviously, these relations threaten Richard's career as well as Ulrich's, and Ulrich demands that his son break up with the Jewish girl. Afraid of betraying his father's hopes and love, Richard obeys, and Aida returns to her parents.

Ulrich manages to hush up Theo's homosexual scandal, but now Theo must immediately marry. Ulrich makes sure Theo's boyfriend never gives evidence in court; the young man is found dead in a prison cell. When Theo learns of his lover's murder, he attempts suicide but is saved by his brother. Theo explains his reasons for the attempt not with sorrow over the death of his boyfriend or the impending marriage, but jealousy of Richard, who is Ulrich's more successful son. Unaware that Richard overhears their conversation, Ulrich assures Theo that Richard was taken into the house only to stimulate Theo to act properly. Disillusioned and embittered by the betrayal of his newly gained father, Richard rapes his father's young wife and leaves the house, hoping to reconnect with Aida. He finds Joachim's flat empty – Ulrich has made sure the Jewish family was deported out of turn.

Ulrich sends Richard away from Berlin to serve as a guard in a concentration camp. Among the prisoners, Richard recognizes Joachim. He searches for Aida and her mother in the female zone, where he is told that both have died. Richard will never know that Aida was not murdered in a gas chamber with her mother, but that she survived through hardships, torture, sexual violence, and the loss of a newborn child until her eventual liberation.

Severely mourning Aida's death and shaken by the beastly atrocities in the hellish camp, Richard pleads with Joachim to resume therapy. Joachim is desperate at the loss of his family and does not aspire to survive. But he cannot turn Richard down. In their journey to Richard's childhood and the young man's real self, Joachim gains the only reason to live – as a dying prisoner and a desperate old man, he is set to save this person.



Therapy

Selected quotes

Therapy is a Freudian novel about Holocaust, written by a practicing psychologist. This is a brilliantly written, stylistically impeccable text, where realism and symbolism blend in a profound, sensual, and fearless narrative.

Vladimir Mirzoev
a film director and producer

This is a story about a young man's personality getting destroyed after he entrusts the meaning of his life to someone or something else — to the state. Richard gets to learn he was made a part of the mechanism of destruction, but this realization will cost thousands of people their lives.

Alexei Guskov
an actor and producer

At first it seems the work lacks brave characters who can dare to challenge fate. People here try to survive, and by conforming they form their time. But then life sets the roles — one will be an executioner, the other will be a victim. And at this moment the choice has to be made, and the heroes begin to react, in accordance or confrontation with the imposed roles.

Alexander Gelman
a playwright





About the author:

DINA RUBINA is an Israeli Russian-language writer. Born in Tashkent, Uzbekistan in 1953, Dina Rubina had her first stories published in 1970s in Yunost (Youth) magazine. She has received numerous awards, and is the bestselling author of over 40 titles, including eight novels. Dina Rubina's novels and novellas have been made into films, adapted for TV, and staged in theaters in Russia and Israel. Dina Rubina is the Big Book Award winner in 2007 and 2020 (reader's choice) for the novels *On the Sunny Side of the Street* and *Napoleon's Train*. In 2009 she won one of the Russian Literature prizes for the novel *The White Dove of Cordoba*. Each new title by Dina Rubina is published in a first edition of 50,000 to 80,000 copies. The total printing of the author's work is over two million copies. Since 1990 Dina Rubina has lived in Ma'ale-Adumim, Israel with her family, artist Boris Karafelov, her daughter and grandchildren.

Selected Bibliography

- 2021 — **Gurevich, the Maniac**, *novel*
- 2020 — **A Lonely Person Who Writes**, *autobiographical novel*
- 2018-2019 — **Napoleon's Train**, *novels*
- 2017 — **Lady Wind**, *novel*
- 2014-2015 — **The Russian Canary Bird**, *novels*
- 2010 — **The White Dove of Cordoba**, *novel*
- 2010 — **The Petroushka Syndrome**, *novel*
- 2008 — **Leonardo's Handwriting**, *novel*
- 2006 — **On the Sunny Side of the Street**, *novel*
- 2001 — **On Upper Maslovka**, *novel*
- 1996 — **Here Comes the Messiah!**, *novel*

The total printing of
the author's work is
over 2 million copies!

Finalist of the **Big Book Award 2020** (2nd prize in Reader's Choice)

Shortlisted for the **Big Book Award 2015**

Finalist of the **Russian Prize 2009**

Winner of the **International Portal Prize 2009** (Ukraine)

Winner of the **Big Book Award 2007** (3rd Prize)

Shortlisted for the **Russian Booker Prize 2007**

Longlisted for the **Yasnaya Polyana Award 2007**

Finalist of the **Russian Prize 2010**
 The total printing of
the novel is
250 000 copies


The White Dove of Córdoba

This gripping art forgery crime drama propels through epochs and countries (Spain in the 17th century, Leningrad under siege and in the end of the 1970ies, the Ukrainian pre-war and post-war Vinnitsa, modern Vatican, Jerusalem, Toledo and Córdoba in Spain) to tell a spelling and dramatic story of a genius artist and to make yet another attempt to find an answer to eternal bitter conflicts of destiny vs man's will, a family's history and a person's solitude, the Jewish devotion to land and fascination with the nation's (and a family's) history vs the spacious lavishness and negligence of the Russian soul.

Eksmo

Novel, 2009

544 pp

Translation rights sold

German Pereprava

Lithuanian Nordina

Ukrainian Bogdan-Ternopol

Polish Muza

Estonian Tänapäev

Latvian Janis Roze

Albanian Ombra

Czech Republic Columbus

Turkish Alfa Kitap

Bulgarian Labyrinth

Simplified Chinese Shandong Publishing House of

Literature and Art

Hebrew Keter

An unrivalled art forger, touched by a true genius, an engaging intellectual, Zakhar Cordovin is not another hero in the line of greatest perpetrators in the criminal art scene. Impudent and passionate equally about love, life and art, Cordovin has to pay the highest price for his own crimes, but also dramas and mysteries permeating the centuries-long history of the Jewish-Spanish family of the Cordoveras.

Born in the post-war Ukrainian Vinnitsa, Zakhar Cordovin studied art in Leningrad, spent a few years in Stockholm, and now lectures on art in the University of Jerusalem and roams all over Europe chasing obscure art works that he will revive and sell for lavish sums of money, having attributed to the greatest masters of the past. On one of his European trips Cordovin spots an old painting that he immediately identifies as belonging to one of El Greco's pupils. A troubling re-semblance of the artist's name — Zacarias Cordovera — with his own, fascinates Cordovin, but he is also haunted with the image of a saint depicted in the portrait and certain details revealed during the restoration.

A brilliantly concocted forgery scheme culminates with a millions-worth sale of "a previously unknown El Greco painting" to Vatican. Yet Cordovin sets off on his personal investigation of the true story of the painting that eventually brings him to Córdoba and puts face to face with his family's tragic past. This sweeping chase after phantoms and mysteries of his family intertwines with the criminal story from Cordovin's student years in Leningrad. Back then his involvement into a criminal art

scene resulted in a brutal murder of his close friend, challenging him years later with a no-option choice of a murder in revenge. It is in Córdoba that Zakhar Cordovin pulls all links into one deadly knot and finds the only solution to recoup the tragic mistakes and betrayals that he had once committed.

Dina Rubina does an amazing job of composing a breathtaking thrilling story set against the international shadow world of art forgers, art dealers and gross money deals. With a sure hand she draws a vivid panorama of countries, landscapes and art — to an irrevocable effect: readers immediately fall in love with this finely concocted and re-produced world and with the text itself. In the broadest gallery of genuine characters — immigrants, provincials, weirdos and straightforward lunatics, intellectuals, art experts, poets, criminals of various ranks and sorts, art dealers and artists — there is no chance appearance.

Each character has a unique voice that tells his story — be it a whimsical Cordovin's aunt Zhuka in Leningrad; or a grouchy uncle Sema in the Ukrainian Vinnitsa; or Margo, an uproarious partner in their art scam; or the dearest childhood friend Andryusha, an involuntary victim of Cordovin's bashful art crime... Dina Rubina's prose is unsentimental, but is full of genuine sympathy towards her characters, sympathy and love.

Over 400,000
copies
sold

The Petroushka Syndrome

Much like in Lawrence Durrell's enduring classic, *The Alexandria Quartet*, Dina Rubina gives the stage to a diverse cast of voices as she tells the wrenching, enchanted, tragic, somewhat mystical, evocative, and ultimately happy love story of a poignantly flawed puppeteer touched by true genius, and his fragile wife, haunted by the ghosts of her family's dark past. Part impassioned love drama, part evocative family story, part mystical Gothic novel about puppets and puppeteers, and part intellectual examination of history and art, *The Petroushka Syndrome* is a beautifully symbiotic novel about identity and the act of creation, longing, loss and, ultimately, love.

Eksmo

Novel, 2010
428 pp

Translation rights sold

French Macha Publishing
Bulgarian Labyrinth
Simplified Chinese Shandong Publishing House of
Literature and Art
Lithuanian Nordina
Czech Omega/Dobrovsky
Turkish Alfa Kitap
Hungarian Europa

Film rights

Feature film directed by Elena Khazanova was released
in Russia in 2015

When an eight-year-old boy, Petya Uksusov, watches a fiery red-haired lady fall out a window (she falls just like a puppet!), he cannot imagine that this image will trigger the two biggest obsessions of his entire life: puppets and Liza. That same evening, a shut-down, autistic Petya starts playing with fellow kids' puppets, demonstrating unique skills and almost supernatural powers for performance, literally breathing life into dolls. The next day, Petya notices a red-haired baby girl in a buggy at a grocery store, and, smitten by the baby's beauty (she's just like a doll!), decides he absolutely must kidnap the girl. When Liza is returned to her father, Petya discovers she is the daughter of the woman who committed suicide. Petya keeps the girl constant company from then on. When the girl reaches college age, they run away from her father, a lawyer with a repulsive personality and troublingly unhealthy sexual inclinations.

Over the years, Petya becomes an internationally renowned puppeteer who is much in demand; he marries Liza. Together the couple perform a provocative and arresting dance number that wins them vast acclaim. The death of their infant son from a rare and incurable genetic disorder known as the Petroushka Syndrome (male infants in Liza's family have suffered from the syndrome for many generations; the symptoms include a high degree of mental disability, a constant smile on the face, and early death), drives both parents to the verge of despair: Petya, because his wife's life is

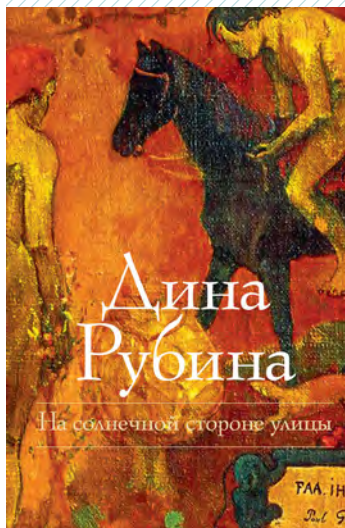
falling out of his control, and Liza, because she's failing in the fight with the sinister ghosts of her family's dark past. Liza suffers from a severe mental breakdown, ending up in an Israeli rehab center, under the care of Petya's childhood friend. Liza's rehabilitation is disrupted when she discovers that Petya is creating a new puppet, an exact copy of his wife, a true masterpiece of his genius as a puppeteer, and Ellis will now replace Liza in their famous dancing gig. As Liza frantically attempts to confront her Doppelgänger, her husband's artful creation, Petya is set to find the truth about their families' past, the only truth that could save their marriage, career, and even their life.

Told through multiple narrators' perspectives (Petya's story intersects with that of Boris, Petya's childhood friend and Liza's doctor), this melodramatic story rises to philosophical and psychological levels to reach the depth and electricity of a true tragedy. Dina Rubina exquisitely renders settings of a Polish-Jewish Lviv, a desperately vast Sakhalin, a snowy Prague, and a torrid Jerusalem with rich detail and texture. This becomes the colorful backstage for the author's compelling version of the Pygmalion myth with echoes of a sinister Golem.

Complete
French translation
available

I believe that a person is so multi-dimensional and so complex and excitingly simple, that a so-called author's perspective just isn't enough: the characters should mould images of one other, becoming one other's puppeteers, demiurges, and gods... The reader is free to find their own hero and even their own story within these multiple worlds since the story, too, spins on a revolving stage, revealing new facets with each turn.

Dina Rubina says

Winner of the **Big Book Award 2007** (3rd Prize)Shortlisted for the **Russian Booker Prize 2007**Longlisted for the **Yasnaya Polyana Award 2007**

Eksmo

Novel, 2006

432 pp

Translation rights sold

Italian Ancora

Norwegian Cappelen Damm

Vietnamese Nhamam

Polish Muza

Bulgarian Damyani Yakov

French Macha Publishing

Croatian Hena

Simplified Chinese Beijing Qingcheng Culture

Armenian Vernatun

On the Sunny Side of the Street

An engrossing love drama, an engaging argument on the nature of art and a grandiose polyphonic ode to Tashkent, *On the Sunny Side of the Street* became a markpoint for Dina Rubina's spectacular literary career, firmly positioning her as one of the most widely read writer in Russia today.

This is a captivating story of two strong female characters. There's Katya, who as a girl escapes from the siege of Leningrad and is evacuated to Tashkent. In the post war city, overcrowded with people from all parts of the country in desperate and greedy need to survive, Katya quickly learns to use her original skill of grasping mere details and a natural talent for mimicry for criminal purpose: a swindler in local markets at first, she grows into a ruthless head of cannabis smuggling net. Her daughter Vera inherits her mother's sharp eye and an ingenious talent, but chooses differently, becoming a true artist with a bright international career. Both mother's and daughter's ways to professional recognition are nothing less but trying, filled with tragic mistakes, unendurable loss(es) and one true love.

The entwining life stories of the novel's two heroines are drawn against a gaudy background of an Oriental city, Tashkent, with its sun-soaked bazaars, crowded yards and a picturesque and engaging cast of characters representing different cultural, ethnical and social backgrounds. This lavishness of the story is masterly

reflected in the novel's complex structure. The drama of a bitter mother and daughter confrontation is intersected with numerous first-person narratives from Tashkent's former residents as they remember the city of their childhood and youth, as well as the author's own colorful childhood memories.

In this novel Rubina succeeds with brilliance in mastering writing skills that make her literary trademarks: the author's juicy Babel-esque language; a gripping narrative's plot; a tender humor, grit and passion in a unanimous accord; a vivid, real-life details and characters.

Selected quotes

Dina Rubina's *On the Sunny Side of the Street* is the work of a literary magpie: the novel combines a comfortable nest of a story with shiny devices and descriptive passages that attract attention and embellish. Fortunately, the story underlying all the decoration is engrossing, thanks to the situations and city, Tashkent, in which Rubina places her characters.

Lizok's Bookshelf

She is perhaps the only modern Russian-language author who manages to combine elements that are often mutually exclusive, such as popular appeal and critical acclaim, thrilling action and rich, expressive language... Rubina is a virtuoso author. She is adept at coming up with gripping storylines, while at the same time filling her books with real-life details, striking metaphors and believable characters.

RBTH

Rubina describes Tashkent deliciously, in detail, with its colors, smells, and distinctive speech patterns. Any plot at all could develop amid decorations like these.

TimeOut

These are two works (*On Upper Maslovka* and *On the Sunny Side of the Street*) that break out of the format, where good, light fiction rises far above the usual mass level because the literary setting isn't fabricated but 'quilted' with the thread of life, with vitality.

Voprosy Literaturny



About the author:

KIRILL RYABOV (1983) was born in Leningrad. He has been noticed by the professional literary community since 2005 when he started publishing his short stories and short novels (novellas) in literary magazines and anthologies. In 2009, his story Spit was selected for an anthology of Russia's new fiction from young writers (edited by Jeff Parker) that was published to good reviews in the United States by Tin House Books. Ryabov's writing has been nominated three times for the National Bestseller Prize; his novel *Dog* and the book of prose *Fascists* were shortlisted for the award in 2020 and 2022. Kirill Ryabov's work has been adapted for films, including *I Will Be Your Dog* (a short film, by Konstantin Selivestrov, 2019) and a feature film by Dmitry Meskhiev, *Good Girls Will Go to Heaven*. A feature film based on *777* is in production in 2022/23, directed by Alexander Khant. Kirill Ryabov lives in St Petersburg.

Selected Bibliography

2023 — **Troubles**, *novellas and short stories*
2022 — **Fascists**, *novellas and short stories*
2021 — **777**, *novel*
2021 — **No-One Returns**, *a short novel*
2020 — **Hangdogs**, *novellas and short stories*
2019 — **A Dog**, *novel*
2015 — **Glue**, *novella and short stories*
2013 — **Burner of Corpses**, *short stories*

Shortlisted for the **National Bestseller Prize 2022, 2020**

Longlisted for the **Big Book Award 2020**

The Young Petersburg Literary Prize 2009

Nominated for the **National Bestseller Award 2021****Gorodets**

Novel, 2021

288 pp

Film rights sold

777

Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels meets Gogol's *The Gamblers* in Kirill Ryabov's *777*, a criminal burlesque from Russia's young literary star.

Khlebnikov is a typical little man (in Gogol's sense) — an ordinary resident of a small shabby town in the Russian Far East. There's not much in his life to brag about or remember: the failed dream of becoming a singer, stern wife and unfriendly stepson, dull underpaid job as a cook in a burger joint, and a shadowy petty criminal incident in the past... Khlebnikov once withdrew his meagre salary from an ATM but the cash machine delivered more than two million rubles. This is a fortune for him, an unforeseen chance to change his life. Khlebnikov rents a room in a fleabag motel on the outskirts of town so he can come up with a plan for escaping into a brighter new world. It's no big surprise that his plans won't work and Khlebnikov soon finds himself caught up in events that spin out of his control: a drinking bout, getting set up by an old friend, falling for a hooker, and threats from local gangsters and the bank's security department. Now Khlebnikov isn't pursuing the life of his dreams but simply trying to stay alive.

Ryabov turns a conventional heist crime comedy about the aftermath of a lucky gain into an absurd and even tragic story. A vivid cast of true-to-life characters draws compassionate readers into a rollercoaster of events. Every character shakes off cliché to offer the depth and scope of an almost ancient hero. With his sharp tongue firmly in his cheek, Ryabov tells a crime story about the misadventures of a very ordinary man with a big fortune and transforming it thanks to keen observation of human nature that embraces compassion and greed, lust and lyricism, poetry, fears, and love. There's no false pathos in the novel, filled with life, credibility, real human dramas, and dry humor. Ryabov's sharp eye in depicting the realities of provincial Russia together with bewildering WTF plot twists make *777* a true reading adventure.

Selected quotes

This realism, though, leaves plenty of room for surreal and dryly humorous perspectives.

Publisher's Weekly

A funny and scary Guy Ritchie story with a smokey touch of Russian chthonic universe.

Vadim Levental

the publisher, the prize-winning author of Masha Regina

I don't remember when a literary work had such a genuinely heavy impact on me. I believe literature should hammer at the reader, and that's exactly the case here.

Dmitry Danilov

a celebrated poet and playwright

Kirill Ryabov's simple story has a mesmerizing effect. In the first place, it is due to a unique authorial style that's conversational and laconic, with fine details reminiscent of poetry in prose. The real world in Ryabov's novel seems to be a chaos inhabited by monsters and tricksters. Once you confront it, the only way to survive is to become a hero. Even if you are a ridiculous hero or an outspoken fool, you must struggle for better luck or simply for your mundane life.

gorky Media

Russian chthonic or chronic province, many dog-inspired metaphors, a big debt, issues with residency, hero as outsider, frightening debt collectors, unhappy and affectionate hookers, even an old man with a gun and God allusions are in place. Ryabov, much in the spirit of Martin McDonagh, continues to conceal humor behind despair and you don't quite know if you feel amused or desperate, though *777* is at most fun.

God Literary

Ryabov balances between elaborate realism (he's very true in describing a hangover, in particular) and fantasy that's indistinguishable from truth; in a way they say that truth is stranger than fiction. The same may be applied to Ryabov, who indeed constantly elaborates on fiction and its edges, while also being the brightest glorifier as well as the annihilator of the spirit of the 1990s.

Forpost

Danila Bagrov plays Jesus.

Prochtenie.org

About the author:

KARINA SHAINYAN was born in Grozny, Chechnya, in 1976 and grew up in the town of Okha, northern Sakhalin. A graduate of Moscow State University with a degree in social psychology, she has spent more than two decades leading horseback expeditions through the wild landscapes of the Altai Mountains — an experience that infuses her recent novel, *Saspyga*, with raw authenticity and a deep sense of place.

Shainyan is the author of numerous short stories and several acclaimed novels. Her debut, *The Long Road to Bimini*, an urban fantasy laced with absurdist elements, won silver at the Star Bridge convention in Kharkiv and was named Best Debut at Eurocon.

In the past few years, her work has shifted from adventure and science fiction into the realms of magical realism and psychological thriller. Her novel *A Key Around Her Neck* was longlisted for the prestigious National Bestseller Prize and won the “Best Film Pitch” prize at the New Horizons Award in 2022. Shainyan’s recent novel, *Saspyga*, explores haunting folklore and the human psyche. Film adaptation rights to both *A Key Around Her Neck* and *Saspyga* have been sold.

After the publication of *Saspyga* in 2025, Shainyan chose to limit the novel’s promotion and declined nominations for major national awards.

Karina lives with her family in Tomsk, Western Siberia. Whenever she is not leading her next horse riding tour, she works on a new novel.



Selected Bibliography

- 2025 — **Saspyga**, *novel*
- 2022 — **A Key Around Her Neck**, *novel*
- 2016 — **The Colored Watch**, *novel*
- 2014 — **The Game. Snake Island**, *novel*
- 2010 — **The Long Road to Bimini**, *novel*
- 2009 — **The Life of Monsters**, *short stories*

Awards

- Longlisted for **the National Bestseller Prize** 2022
- Best Film Pitch **New Horizons Award** 2022
- Best Novel (Silver) **Star Bridge Award**, Kharkiv 2010
- Best Debut **Eurocon**, Cieszyn 2010



Elena Shubina Publishing (AST)

Novel, 2025
381 pp

Translation rights
All rights available

Audio rights
Vimbo

Film rights optioned

TV series in
development

Saspyga

Altai Gothic Noir

In the vein of Jim Jarmusch's *The Dead Man*, *Saspyga* takes you on a chilling odyssey of mysticism and transformation through the Altai Mountains, over the ridge to the spirit world. Among towering peaks, pristine valleys, crystal-clear rivers, and herds of horses, there hides a saspyga, whose meat quenches all sorrows.

The story unfolds in the Altai Mountains, in the present day, during a trek organized by a local horse-riding tourist camp. What begins as familiar campfire fare — local legends and eerie stories told to spook travelers — slowly entwines with a darker metaphysical drama centered on two women: Asya, who has fled the stifling monotony of her life in a big city (a proofreader's job, an ex-fiancé — mundane, almost laughably so), and Katya, the cook who accompanies the local horse tours.

When Asya breaks away from the main group, Katya is sent to find her. She tracks her down quickly enough, but Asya stubbornly refuses to return. She has chosen her own path — and Katya has no choice but to follow. Alone, the city-bred woman won't survive in the mountains, and Katya hopes she might still persuade her to come back.

But it soon becomes clear that the journey belongs to more than just the two of them. Asya, the land itself, the restless local spirits, even their horses — bearing, in uncanny fashion, the names of stallions torn apart by wolves five years ago — seem to harbor their own visions of what lies ahead.

And so Asya walks a trail once crossed, long ago, by Katya herself. Back then, Katya had joined a group of seasoned hunters in driving a saspyga, an elusive and dexterous inhabitant of the mountains with a seductively sweet meat, into a trap. Katya had nearly managed to banish that memory, to bury the horror — but now the past rises to meet her once more. The sweet meat of a saspyga, locals believe, can quench all sorrows. One should follow only one rule on the quest — to never look into the creature's face. Years ago, Katya broke the rule so the magic did not work on her. If only Katya can summon the courage to remember, if she resists the temptation to partake of the saspyga, if she looks into the face of the saspyga again — she may yet save Asya from an imminent, grim fate. There are many trails in the mountains to run away on, but only one way to return — by finding your own self.

Karina Shainyan sets her "Altai Gothic thriller" against probably the world's most mesmerizing scenery, where the suspense-drama plot weaves with the local lore and ethnic mythology. Shainyan probes the modern yearning for escape, asking what price one is truly willing to pay for the illusion of a life without troubles, and what it takes to remain human in the wild.

Selected quotes

The setting is the Altai, described with hyper-realistic precision: a sacred land, a mystical borderland where peonies and aconite bloom, where the dead come to life, and where something otherworldly shines clearly through the thin fabric of the everyday. <...> There are authors who can write about places and people with precision and affection, making them warm, alive, and instantly recognizable. There are authors who can spin dizzyingly gripping stories. But those who can do both are rare. Karina Shainyan's novel is at once a chilling, immersive horror, a tense psychological drama, and an inspired hymn to the Altai land.

Galina Yuzefovich
literary critic

Karina Shainyan's *Saspyga* defies description, demanding to be told in opposites. It is a novel of mysticism, where the Altai Mountains twist and shimmer, where time itself seems suspended, where horses once torn apart by wolves return alive, and where a strange feathered creature — the elusive saspyga, unspoken yet always sought — haunts the edges of the tale. And yet it is also starkly, almost painfully real: the mountains rendered with such precision that the very landscape seems

to push up through the page. *Saspyga* is at once spellbinding and elusive, timeless and acutely modern — a story that resists retelling.

Afisha

The rails of myth run in circles, which means a turn is always possible, which means at any moment the cart can break free and go off the tracks. But there is good news: since the turn is constant, it is never too late to jam the lever.

NATE magazine

Here [in the novel] is the everyday simplicity of looming horror, the fear woven into the ordinary — that something is there, just behind your back. [In *Saspyga*] *Stranger Things* are set in the Altai Mountains, among untrodden paths and jagged peaks. Here emerge a clarity and restraint that signal true mastery: in Shainyan's hands, the terrifying loses its fairytale quality and becomes reality itself, the very fabric of existence. Sit on a stump, eat a pie — before the pie eats you first.

Rules of Life magazine



About the author:

MIKHAIL SHISHKIN is one of the most celebrated Russian authors today. Born in 1961 in Moscow, he worked as a school teacher and journalist. In 1995 he moved to Switzerland, where he worked as a Russian and German translator within the Immigration Department and specifically with Asylum Seekers. His writing debut in 1993, *Calligraphy Lesson*, a short story translated into French and Finnish, has won him the Prize for the Best Debut of the Year. Since then his works — both fiction and non-fiction — have been translated into 35 languages and have received a large number of prestigious national and international awards, including Haus der Kulturen der Welt International Literature Award (2011), Premio Strega Europeo 2022, the Russian Booker Prize (2000), the National Bestseller Prize (2006), the Big Book Award (2006, 2011) and many others. Today Shishkin is a fearless critic of Putin's regime and Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

Mikhail Shishkin's prose fuses the best of the Russian and European literary traditions. The richness and sophistication of the language, the unique rhythm and melody of a phrase, the endless play with words and the nuanced psychological undercurrent are reminiscent of Nabokov and Chekhov. The change of narration styles and narrators within a text yield a fragmented, mosaic structure of composition that focuses on the language itself, recalling James Joyce's genius.

Selected Bibliography

2019 — **Pease or War. Russia and the West**, *essays*

2017 — **Half-Belt Overcoat**, *short stories, essays*

2010 — **Letterbook**, *novel*

2005 — **Maidenhair**, *novel*

2002 — **Tracing Byron and Tolstoj in the Alps**, *essay*

2000 — **Russian Switzerland**, *essay*

2000 — **Taking of Izmail**, *novel*

1993 — **Calligraphy Lesson**, *short story*



Complete list of prizes and awards



Premio Strega Europeo 2022

Shortlisted for **Leipzig Book Fair Prize 2013**

Haus der Kulturen der Welt International Literature Award 2011

The Big Book Award 2011

Halpérine-Kaminski Prize for the Best Translation 2007

Shortlisted for **Giuseppe Berto Prize 2007**

Grinzane Cavour Prize 2007

The Best Foreign Book of the Year of the 21st Century (China)

Shortlisted for **Bunin Literary Award 2006**

The Big Book Award 2006

Shortlisted for **Andrei Belyi Literary Award 2006**

The National Bestseller Prize 2005

The Best Foreign Book of the Year (France) 2005

Main Literary Prize of Zürich 2002

The Russian Booker Prize 2000

Globus Prize 2000

Literary Prize of Canton Zürich 2000

The Best Russian Debut of the Year 1994

Selected quotes

One of the most prominent names in modern Russian literature.

Publishers Weekly

[Shishkin] takes Nabokov's remarkable linguistic flexibility but none of his arrogance; like Chekhov, he looks on humanity with humor and compassion. Shishkin's Baroque turns of phrases seem written out of necessity and joy rather than pretention; he respects his readers, he delights in language, and he does not need to show off.

Madeleine LaRue

The Quarterly Conversation

If someone in this world has the right to claim the title of "the Sun of Russian Literature" it should be Mikhail Shishkin. <...> As soon as he finishes writing, delightful reviews and awards immediately follow. After

that — a new plunge into creative vortex until the next triumphant emersion.

Galina Yuzefovich
Expert

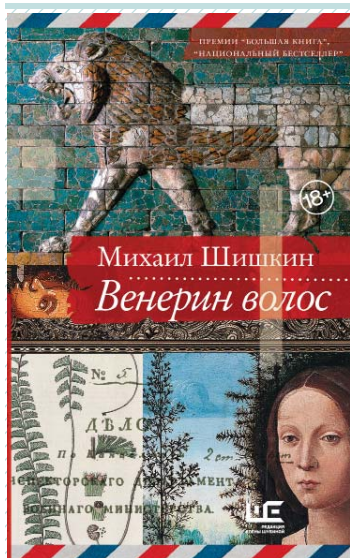
Shishkin proves to be one of the most gifted authors of the Russian literary stage, especially because he manages to disregard fashion and create his own style and literary concept.

Ulrich Schmidt
Neue Zürcher Zeitung

Shishkin's agile, inventive narration reveals his homeland anew, showing once again why he has become one of Russia's most valued storytellers — and an important new author in the West.

Literalab

Bestseller
70 000 copies
sold



Vagrius, 2005
Elena Shubina Publishing (AST), 2011
Novel
479 pp

Translation rights

English US Open Letter
English UK Quercus Books
Danish Batzer & Co
Swedish Ersatz
Estonian Varrak
Norwegian Forlaget Oktober
Greek Metaichmio
Slovenian DSP
German DVA
French Fayard
Italian Voland Edizione
Serbian Paideia
Bulgarian Fakel
Simplified Chinese People's Literature
Lithuanian Vaga
Polish Noir sur Blanc
Romanian Curtea Veche
Arabic Al Mada
Albanian Dituria
Spanish Impedimenta
Hungarian Gondolat

Complete
English translation
available

Maidenhair

"Maidenhair is a kind of book they give a Nobel Prize for. This novel is majestic ..." — this quote from Bookshelf Magazine is just a small fraction of the praise the book has received in Russia, and rightly so. It is a brilliant novel that unquestionably belongs with the greatest works of Russian literature. It's universal at its core — and not only because the action takes place across countries and historical epochs, virtually destroying boundaries. The whole novel is a metaphor for the resurrection of the soul — through the word. And through love.

The story begins in Switzerland — the narrator works at the local immigration office, interpreting interviews with Russian refugees seeking asylum. They all tell stories — some came to Zurich from Chechnya, others from orphanages, some lost their houses in the war, had parents murdered in front of their eyes, or were raped in prison with a mop handle, tortured, persecuted. They tell these stories for one reason: to stay. One horrid story follows another, in a chain of endless questions and answers. We don't know what's true and what's not anymore, but in the end it really doesn't matter whether it actually happened — it's enough to know that the stories are true. Now they have a chance to rewrite their lives, to get a new beginning, to find their true selves. The interpreter becomes the only link between the two worlds, the gatekeeper to a better life. Their lives may lead to death — unless he redeems them. Once again, with a word.

Between the interviews, the interpreter writes letters to his son, addressing him as Emperor Navuhodonozaur — letters that will never be sent, describing his life as a servant of the "Swiss Paradise Ministry of Defense." He remembers his past, reviving and reliving the story of his doomed love, which resonates with other great love stories of world literature — Daphnis and Chloe, Tristan and Isolde.

In the meantime, he reads Anabasis by Xenophon about the Persian expedition. And since the written word has the power to revivify the past, it is today that the Greek mercenaries retreat to the sea, march through deserts and towns, cross over rivers — and meet a group of Chechen refugees coming down

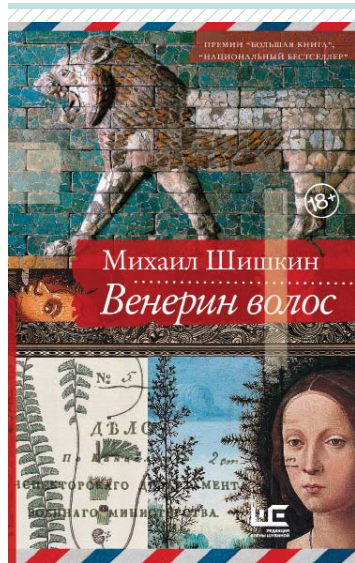
from the mountains, having sworn they'd rather die than surrender to the Russians. Time becomes irrelevant, their meeting seems only natural, and so the Greeks and the Chechens continue their journey together. Interviews, letters, memories, love stories, Greeks, Chechens are linked in a single chain of events and human destinies — interwoven, resonating with one another, outside of time.

Another distinctive voice in this chorus is a fictional diary of Bella, or Isabella Yurjeva, a Russian romance singer, notorious beauty, and socialite whom the main character uses to write her biography — or to bring her back to life as he interprets his task. It's nothing more than a girl's private diary, where she describes her childhood, love affairs, success, and setbacks — yet somehow it manages to depict a whole era, from pre-Soviet times to the present, through the events of her 100-year life.

In Maidenhair, Shishkin demonstrates utter proficiency in various styles and manners of speech. The main character's line of work is by no means accidental — his interpreting skills are a metaphor for omniscience, and for the real meaning of a Word — thus his almost obsessive desire to find the tomb of Saint Cyril, the creator of the Cyrillic alphabet, while in Rome. This is the alphabet of which his universe is made. The world is magic only because its story can be told. It's unpredictable and erratic, but what once existed will exist forever. In the word.

Maidenhair is in many ways an autobiographical novel. Just like his main character, Mikhail Shishkin worked as an interpreter at an immigration agency.





Maidenhair

Selected quotes

A beautiful, powerful and fascinating book which will become a milestone not only in the history of Russian literature but in the development of Russian self-awareness.

Bakhyt Kenzheyev
Nezavisimaya gazeta

The first reading of Maidenhair is like tipping the pieces of a 1000-piece jigsaw out of the box and turning them all picture-side up...

Slightly Booklist

Shishkin's work has been described as "refined neo-modernism." His dense, lyrical prose suggests the influence of Ulysses, but Shishkin objects that "Joyce doesn't love his heroes"; in Maidenhair love is the crucial answer to most of the hundreds of questions.

Pheobe Taplin
Russia Beyond The Headlines

In short, Maidenhair is the best post-Soviet Russian novel I have read. Simply put, it is true literature, a phenomenon we encounter too rarely in any language.

Daniel Kalder
The Dallas Morning News

Maidenhair is a great novel about a word and a language that becomes soft and obedient in the hands of a Master. It can create any other reality which will be more stunning and credible than the real world. The gap between a word and a fact, between reality and its translation to the human language is a real hotbed of internal tension in the novel.

Maya Kucherskaya
polit.ru

Maidenhair is likely a work of genius... If Shishkin is right about the power of words to resurrect the dead, Maidenhair has all but secured his immortality.

Christopher Tauchen
Words Without Borders

Meanwhile, Shishkin's work is not at all a philological novel for a literary coterie or a boring high brow read that reminds one of lapped milk. Although very different from Pavic's works, it could become just as famous.

Vladimir Berezin
Time Out

Maidenhair is a kind of book they give the Nobel prize for. The novel is majestic.

Knizhnaya Vitrina



The international
bestseller**Random House**

Essays, German language
2019
384 pp

Translation rights

World English Quercus Books
Italian 21 Lettere
Swedish Fri Tanke
French Noir sur Blanc
Spanish Armaenia
Polish Noir sur Blanc
Lithuanian Vaga
Finnish WSOY
Norwegian Cappelen Damm
Estonian SA Kultuurileht
Romanian Curtea Veche
Slovakian Slovart
Croatian Tim Press
Japanese Hakusuisha
Dutch Querido
Spanish Impedimenta
Portuguese Relógio D'Água
Czech Prostor

Peace or War

Russia and the West – A Path to Understanding

A unique insight into a foreign, mysterious country nearby. Is there a reason to fear Moscow? Could Russia have any reason to distrust the West? How are the tensions between East and West fuelled — and could they be solved?

The award-winning writer Mikhail Shishkin shares his understanding of Russia and the West — and the contrasts and tensions that have been exacerbated over several years. With his deep knowledge of Russia, the writer explores how the epoch of peace and a supposed end of the East–West confrontation could lead to the current crisis. Shishkin's love for Russia is uncompromised, yet he sharply criticizes Putin's authoritarian rule and the politics of the Kremlin. Personal insights, sharp political analyses, and historical overviews make this a crucially important book in difficult times.

From the author: "This book is a collection of essays about Russia, written specifically for the Western reader. Having lived in Europe for so many years helped me recognize the general misconceptions about Russia and Russians that Western people often nourish.

This book is for the reader who refuses to accept clichés and platitudes as ultimate truth. It answers some of the most important 'Russian questions.' Why do 21st-century Westerners travelling the world write about my country as if it were another planet? What is wrong with my country, and why?

What is this whole notion of 'Russianness'? Why do revolutions and attempts at democratic reforms only lead to new dictatorships? Why can't the West and Russia reach understanding after centuries of war and peace? What does it mean to love Russia? Can one still believe in Russia, as Tyutchev once bequeathed?

The essays are devoted to such eternal topics as 'the mystery of the Russian soul' (here is a spoiler: there is no mystery, only the lack of knowledge that adds to a mysterious glare); patriotism and tyranny; 'Live not by lie' (but neither by the truth); 'Neither the church nor the tavern'; 'Russian universality' and hybrid wars; writers and power, and many others.

The future is a glove, and the past is a hand. This is a book about the future of Russia. Therefore, it contains a lot of history. I explain to the Western reader its underwater, deep currents — invisible from the outside, yet determining its course. Without this, the present of my country cannot be understood. The last two chapters are devoted to what awaits us in the coming years and in the not-so-distant future."

Selected quotes

Pleitgen and Shishkin, both sharing a deep knowledge of Russia, duel in a pointed exchange of views of both internal and external sides of things.

Kölner Stadtanzeiger

The long-time ARD reporter in Russia and USA and a Russian writer who won every important literary award in Russia, search together for possible ways of handling relations between the West and the East.

Tagesspiegel

The mysterious Russia: in his book, Mikhail Shishkin explains the nation that the West fails to understand.

L'Union Sarda

From as back as the 19th century the West have considered tsarist Russia as a "prison of people". In his emotionally charged book, Mikhail Shishkin, revisits this concept and discuss it from the actual modern angle.

La Repubblica

Premio Strega Europeo 2022

Shortlisted for the Leipzig Book Fair Prize 2013

The Big Book Award 2011

Haus der Kulturen der Welt International Literature Award 2011



Elena Shubina Publishing (AST)

Novel, 2010

412 pp

Translation rights

World English Quercus

Italian Lettera 21

German DVA

French Noir sur blanc

Spanish Lumen / Random House Mondadori

Japanese Shinchosha

Dutch Querido

Finnish WSOY

Finnish audioplay YLE

Norwegian Oktober

Swedish Ersatz

Danish Batzer & Co

Faroe Sprotin

Icelandic Bjartur

Serbian Paideia

Croatian Naklada Ljevak

Macedonian Antolog

Czech Vitrné mlýny

Slovakian Slovart

Polish Noir sur blanc

Lithuanian Vaga

Latvian Jumava

Estonian Varrak

Bulgarian Fakel

Romanian Curtea Veche

Hungarian Cartaphilus

Simplified Chinese Hunan People Publishing House

Arabic Arab Scientific Publishers

Albanian Fan Noli

Turkish Jaguar

Hebrew Kinneret

Letterbook

The internationally prize-awarded writer Mikhail Shishkin presents a beautifully sad and bewitchingly lucid epistolary novel. The stories of two lovers, told through their love letters across continents and epochs, intertwine in an elaborate text about the mysteries of life, the acceptance of death, and, ultimately, the grasp of eternity.

This latest novel by Mikhail Shishkin is deceptively simple. A man. A woman. Their love letters. A summer house, the first love. Vladimir, Vovka-carrot-top, and Alexandra, Sashka; he goes to war, she stays at home, living an ordinary life. Two people writing to each other about just about everything: their childhood, families, trifles of life, joys and sorrows. What could be more normal? Until we realize things are not what they seem. The deeper readers delve into the writing, the more obvious it becomes that time has been disunited, dissected, and tossed together as in a children's nonsense rhyme.

Time is indeed out of joint, and only these letters bind it together, restoring the world's order. She lives in the 1960s, he goes to the Boxer Uprising in China at the turn of the twentieth century. He dies in the very first battle of this half-forgotten war of his own choosing ("What war? Doesn't matter. A war has always been.

And will always be. And people get injuries and killed. And death is real."), but his letters continue to arrive. She gets married, carries and loses a child, and keeps writing to him as if these letters exist in a parallel universe, as if time doesn't matter, and neither does death.

This is a novel about the mysteries of life and the acceptance of death.

Shishkin is loyal to articulating his principle: the written word is the key, and so is love. "To exist you have to live not in your own mind, which is so unreliable... but in the mind of another person, and not just any person, but the one who cares if you exist."

Shishkin's sophisticated language and intricate style have won him major international literary awards and comparisons to the greatest authors of our time, and *Letterbook* firmly confirms this well-deserved reputation.

Selected quotes

Shishkin is arguably Russia's greatest living novelist... his writing is richly textured and innovative and his themes are universal: love and death, pain and happiness, war and peace... Shishkin's writing is both philosophically ambitious and sensually specific, evoking the rain on a dacha roof, the smell of blossoming lime trees, or the stink of human corpses.

Phoebe Taplin
The Guardian

Whatever the secret of the time scheme, and however magic-realist or metaphysical it might be, it contributes to the book's powerful treatment of love and the vividness of being alive, underscored by the reality of ever-present morality — Shishkin is a writer with a compelling sense of the skull beneath the skin.

Phil Baker
The Sunday Times

There is a lyrical, poetic quality to much of Shishkin's writing... This is certainly the most complicated, protean book I've ever reviewed and one jammed with cultural allusions and ideas.

Tibor Fischer
Standpoint Magazine

Shishkin's prodigious erudition, lapidary phrasing and penchant for generic play are conspicuous components of his art... These characteristics do indeed ally him with Nabokov, as he does have faith in the written

word... And yet, unlike Nabokov, Joyce and many of their postmodern acolytes, Shishkin is unabashedly and unironically sentimental.

Boris Dralyuk
Times Literary Supplement

Mikhail Shishkin is the Ian McEwan of Russia. A prize-winning writer who enjoys stunning commercial and critical success, he's also a literary celebrity in a country that still knows how to celebrate its author-heroes. His latest novel, *The Light and the Dark*, in its brilliant translation, is striking proof that great Russian literature didn't die with Dostoevsky. A wonderful book: it is filled with wonder.

Monocle Magazine

It really does not matter if the lovers have ever met in person. The only witness who counts is the author — or, more precisely, his prose.

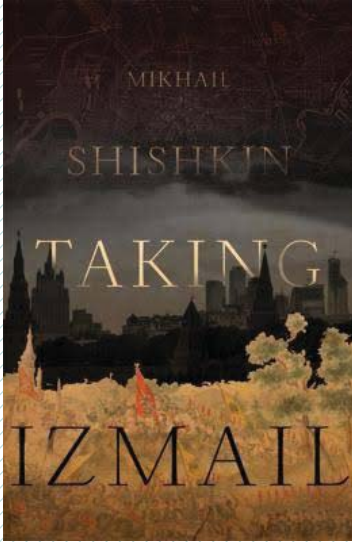
Anna Aslanyan
The Independent

Striking... [Vladimir and Alexandra's] tales cohere into a portrait of Russians growing up too soon, enlisted in causes not their own, exemplified by Sashenka's belief in a second, disobedient self who lives out the dreams she can't.

Publishers Weekly

Complete
English translation
available

Russian Booker Prize 2000

**Vagrius**Novel, 2001
460 p*Translation rights*French Fayard
Italian Voland
German DVA
Romanian Curtea Veche
Macedonian Ars Lamina
Swedish Ersatz
Turkish Jaguar
Serbian Paladeia
Chinese CIP
Estonian Koolibri**Full German and
French translations
available**

Taking Izmail

A groundbreaking novel from Russia's most prominent contemporary writer. In this 1999 work, Mikhail Shishkin displays in full force the writing talents that have won him international recognition for books such as *Maidenhair* and *The Light and the Dark*.

The Izmail of the title is a border fortress town, taken and lost by Russian forces numerous times in history.

Here, it serves as a metaphor for the task of mastering life itself, and the scope of that task is conveyed through a masterfully interwoven panoply of scenes from different times and settings in Russia. In this tour de force of structure, style, and scholarship, the interaction of the scenes creates a genuine sense of the complexity of life.

As Mikhail Shishkin's father says to him in the autobiographical chapter Conclusion: "This life, Mishka, has to be taken like a fortress!"

Among other things, *Taking Izmail* is a young writer's own brilliant storming of that fortress.

One of the most prominent names in modern Russian literature
— Publishers Weekly



About the author:

Marina Stepnova was born in 1971 in the small town of Efremov, in the Tula region. She was raised in Moldova and later moved to Moscow for higher education. She graduated from the Gorky Literary Institute and completed postgraduate studies at the Institute of World Literature. Stepnova's translation from Romanian of Mihail Sebastian's play *Nameless Star* has been staged by numerous theaters throughout Russia.

She is the author of several novels, including *The Women of Lazarus*, a Big Book Award and National Bestseller Prize winner. Stepnova also works as a scriptwriter with prominent directors such as Kantemir Balagov and Avdotya Smirnova. In addition, she teaches creative writing and has discovered and championed new literary voices.

Since 2022, Marina Stepnova has lived in Italy with her family.

Selected Bibliography

2020 — **A New Breed**, *novel*

2014 — **The Italian Lessons**, *novel*

2011 — **The Women of Lazarus**, *novel*

2005 — **The Surgeon**, *novel*

Awards

Yasnaya Polyana Prize 2021 (readers' choice)

Shortlisted for the **Big Book Award** 2021

Shortlisted for the **National Book of the Year** 2020

The Big Book Award 2012 (third prize by the jury and readers' choice)

Shortlisted for the **Russian Booker Prize** 2012

Shortlisted for the **National Bestseller Prize** 2012

Shortlisted for **Yasnaya Polyana Prize** 2012

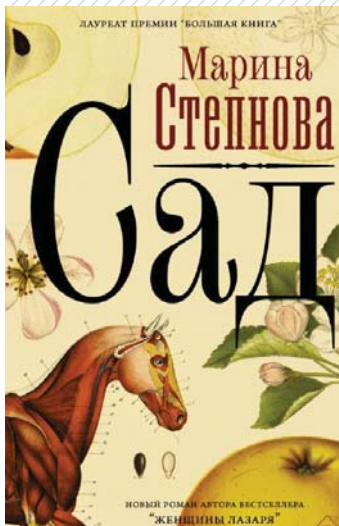
Nominated for the **National Bestseller Prize** 2005

Over
90 000 copies
sold

Yasnaya Polyana Prize 2021 (readers' choice)

Shortlisted for the **Big Book Award** 2021

Shortlisted for the **National Book of the Year** 2020



Elena Shubina Publishing (AST)

Novel, 2020
412 pp

Translation rights

Lithuanian Tyto Alba
Mongolian Nepko
Arabic Thaqafa
Estonian Tānapäev
Hungarian Európa Publishers
Romanian Curtea Veche
Macedonian Antolog
Malayalam (India) Green Books

Audio rights

Vimbo

English sample
available

A New Breed (The Garden)

A New Breed, the much-anticipated new novel from Russia's beloved author of *The Women of Lazarus*, is set at the close of the 19th century on the estate of one of the country's oldest noble families. With her signature lavish, richly textured language, Stepnova portrays a new kind of woman — an individual ultimately free within a rigid society that refuses to accept women as independent or significant figures.

Tusya, the novel's protagonist, does not rebel against existing norms. Instead, she creates a new world of her own. Yet what price will her family, friends, and partners pay for her freedom?

Princess Boryatinskaya, the daughter of an old noble family and a friend of the Empress, gives birth to her third child, Natalia (who only accepts Tusya as a name), at the scandalously improper age of 45. Tusya is the result of a single passionate night in the respected marriage of two noble spouses — it takes place in a newly acquired manor house with a fecund old garden. Tusya, who receives the curative effect of the estate's fresh air beginning at birth, is raised to be a new type of woman, a person of deed, unrestricted will and unbridled freedom. Two people handle her upbringing. The first is her mother, Princess Boryatinskaya, who never leaves the estate after her daughter's birth and never returns to societal duties. The second is Grigory Meizel, a doctor of medicine, who saves the child from death in infancy and devotes his life to Tusya's upbringing. Through Tusya, Meizel hopes to redeem his dishonour: at the violent cholera uprisings in St Petersburg Meizel fled in fear and did not assist his colleague maimed by a frenzied mob. Boryatinskaya and Meizel create a new world for Tusya, where she herself decides when and how to begin to talk, what to study, and what or whom to love. Horses become the girl's true love, and Tusya will stop at nothing to shape the life she desires, with a horse-breeding farm in the forefront of the noble manor house.

The second plane of the novel unfolds in Simbirsk, a new destination for Radovich — an impoverished low-ranked clerk working for the state mail service — and his son. Despite his meagre financial state Radovich, a physically imposing and very handsome person, behaves like a noble man. He creates a myth and raises his only son as a passionate worshiper of the cult of the father, as a vessel of the Serbian royal blood. This legend, which never receives any documentary evidence, creates a shield for Radovich between his mundane, dull, and penniless reality, and the world he and his son happily inhabit. That world is built on total obedience to the trinity of God, the emperor, and the father. A sudden dream-like friendship between Radovich's son and Alexander destroys the very foundation of the Radovich family. Radovich junior inherits his father's attractive appearance, but not his father's psychotic grandness. Self-aware but inherently

flawed, Radovich junior has hardly dreamt of being noticed, not to mention being loved, yet he longs for love and recognition with a youthful anguish. When Alexander Ulianov, the center of Simbirsk academic life and the heart of society, irrevocably chooses Radovich as his friend, Radovich embraces in Ulianov his new self, an ardent follower of his new idol. Alexander Ulianov and Radovich leave together for St Petersburg to pursue a promising (for Alexander, at least) academic career. There Radovich gets to know a court guard captain of Serbian origin — a bon-vivant who opens up a new world for him, made of cocottes, hot chocolate, sparkling wine, gambling — as well as the charm of the guard cavalry and proximity to the emperor himself. Radovich dives passionately into his new life, dismissing Alexander Ulianov just as he had dismissed his father earlier. Embittered with jealousy and pain from the loss of his love, Ulianov ends up plotting against the emperor. Radovich knows about Ulianov's arrest and charges as he travels home out of duty to his gravely ill father. Struck with the mortal fear of imminent persecution as an accomplice to the plot, he is also on the run. Radovich will never come home; he will never see either his father or Ulianov again. He will learn of Ulianov's execution while at Boryatinskaya's estate, where he will be the newly hired manager of the stable and fiancé of the Princess' adopted daughter, Annette. Until Tusya decides differently.

Fate's whim means the two men shaping Tusya's story are broken and flawed — fugitives in a vain attempt to escape from guilt feelings. Yet Tusya will not become either their salvation or their redemption, just as she also cannot be a safe haven: her blinding passion is ruthless and her thirst for a brave new life is inexhaustible.

Stepnova writes in the best traditions of nineteenth century Russian literature: her tone is elegant and her rich word choices are a colorful palette. The author draws readers into the world that she has lavishly painted, and the reader finds themselves lost for the day in the guilty pleasure of crying along with the dramatic turmoil of the characters' ups and downs.





A New Breed (The Garden)

Selected quotes

Marina Stepnova wrote a powerful complex novel that pictures the modern day and its freedom taken for granted by modern children — from the prism of the nineteenth century. In *The Garden*'s universe everything is predetermined, but the socially conditioned passions break out in the most unexpected ways. The novel is beautifully structured, one thing rhyming and echoing with another, weaving elaborately in a pattern reminiscent of the Princess Boryatinskaya's precious shawl.

Forbes.ru

An exquisitely literary text. *The Garden* starts an easy-going intercourse with both Russian and world literature. Marina Stepnova has written a novel that explores the past with the modern vision. She revises history, rewriting it anew, covering a range of topics — from conscious parenting to a book escapism to a crisis behaviour. And it is not about one family — this is a reflection of an epoch. *The Garden* is devised with ease and logic, as a revolver, and in this it is enticingly beautiful.

Novaya Gazeta

The Garden is a sophisticated big novel that alludes to Chekhov, Tolstoy and Turgenev. Stylistically elaborate, exquisite as in needlework, and grand in its scope — this is indeed a literary event, unique and inspiring.

meduza.io

Stepnova's *The Garden* is one of the widely discussed book of 2020. This is a pseudo-historical novel that brings up issues that are topical today: feminism, new ways of parenting, Russian liberalism... In this, Stepnova avoids rigid answers, questioning every problem's resolve. Stepnova succeeds in overcoming the novel's post-modern flow — she fills her text that is a parody by its essence (the parody on literary clichés that deconstructs cultural myths) with lyrics, sympathy and tenderness towards her characters.

Uchitelskaya Gazeta

Stepnova frees 19th century from the enchantment of Chekhov and Dostoevsky. She draws a new image of the 19th century Russia and writes an acutely topical novel — there's an issue of emancipation, a clash between traditions and molding the image of future, striving for the dream despite all odds. It turns out that in order to write a topical modern novel a writer can still set the text in the 19th century, and does not have to mention Covid or protests in Belarus.

literaturno.com



Double winner of the **Big Book Award** 2012 (3rd prize from readers and the jury)

Finalist of the **National Bestseller** 2012

Finalist of the **Russian Booker Award** 2012

Shortlisted for **Yasnaya Polyana Literary Award** 2012

Over 200 000 copies
sold in Russia since
publication



The Women of Lazarus

After the success of her debut novel *The Surgeon* (2005), which gained her the nomination for the National Bestseller Prize and enthusiastic critical acclaim, Marina Stepnova returns with a mesmerizing story of love, loss and human genius.

Marusia and Sergei Chaldonov are indeed blessed in their marriage. He — a respectable scientist with a bright academic career ahead, despite the revolutionary turmoil in Russia at the dawn of the 20th century; she — a beautiful, kind, and intelligent wife. Their complete happiness is marred by one thing only: the couple is childless. After the first years of disappointment and doubt, Marusia makes a deal with God, the terms of which she never reveals to her husband. And in 1918, when Marusia is 49 years old, a child is bestowed on the couple. This child is Lazarus Lindt: an 18-year-old self-educated maverick, a true genius and a peer of the troubled century.

Lazar, too, loves Marusia, and with a passion that is different from filial love. The offspring of a poor Jewish family of which nothing is known besides their name, the prodigy Lazarus Lindt becomes Sergei Chaldonov's brightest pupil, his follower, and in no time outdoes his champion. An easy winner in all fields of science, Lazar fails to accomplish what he wants most. Marusia will never know about the true nature of Lazarus's feelings — not when he, already an acclaimed physicist and head of a promising line in nuclear physics, follows the Chaldonovs to Ansk during the evacuation and stays in the provincial town when Marusia decides against returning to Moscow after the war; not when the jowly and bon vivant refuses to introduce Marusia to any of his numerous lovers; not even when Lazarus takes his chances and articulates his feelings at Sergei Chaldonov's anniversary. Marusia's open-hearted and easy response — "I love you too" — leaves no hope for Lazarus.

Lindt gets love-struck for the second time in his life years after Marusia's quiet and peaceful death. Galina — all peaches and cream, an exceptionally beautiful 18-year-old assistant at a Department of Chemistry in the Ansk Engineering Institute of Water Supply — plans her happy and simple family life with a postgraduate student, when her future knocks on the door of the Department in the guise of the Institute's guest lecturer, the living classic of the physical sciences and father of the Soviet atomic bomb, Lazarus Lindt. Galina responds to Lazarus' passion with virulent hatred unto death, with the stubbornness of a simple and shallow nature. She will never love anyone else, not even her son, who commits suicide after a fatal accident befalls his wife, leaving their 5-year-old daughter Lida an orphan.

The lovely tomboy Lida soon learns to endure pain, living through the spiteful indifference of her grandmother Galina, the physical strains of ballet school, and the despair of unrequited first love. Lida is yet to discover that sometimes you have to go to the farthest ends of the earth and even to die to find your love — and your home.

Marina Stepnova has depicted the country's 20-th century on a broad canvas, permeating it with rhyming fates, echoes of feelings, and the tiniest movements of the human soul. The author's unprecedented literary command enables the reader to marvel and wonder at new meanings underlying the most basic notions of family, home, happiness, and love.

Selected quotes

This is a beautifully written novel with finely observed characters. A masterpiece.

Novaya Gazeta

From the bomb-making scientist in a secret city called Ensk to starving, smoking teenage dancers, filling each other's pointe shoes with ground glass, *The Women of Lazarus* flirts with Russia's enduring clichés even as it constructs a profound and powerful tale about human interaction.

Russia Beyond the Headlines

The Women of Lazarus has all the makings of being this season's Great Novel. We are talking great tragedy, violently burning love and deep psychological portraits, just like in the classical Russian novels.

Allehandia

Marina Stepnova's *Lazar's Women* is one of "those" books: in this case, "those" books are the ones that compel me just a touch more than they repel me. Oddly, for this reader, "those" books have a tendency to be novels where form and content are absolutely inseparable (a big plus) and books that inexplicably leave me with painfully unforgettable scenes and atmospheres (an even bigger plus).

Lizok's Bookshelf

Marina Stepnova unfolds an intoxicating tale with sensibility and humour.

Culturoipoing

Elena Shubina Publishing (AST)

Novel, 2011

444 pp

Translation rights

World English World Editions (available since 2021)

Dutch DeGeus

German btb

French Les Escales

Italian Voland

Swedish 2244

Norwegian Agora

Estonian Tänapäev

Hungarian Európa Publishers

Lithuanian Tyto Alba

Polish Czarna Owca

Latvian Janis Roze

Serbian Agora

Bulgarian Prozoretz

Czech Euromedia

Romanian Curtea Veche

Albanian Fan Noli

Macedonian Antolog

Croatian Naklada Ljevak

Armenian Vogt Nairi

Greek Livani

Slovenian Forum

Arabic AS Publishers

Simplified Chinese Ginkgo Book (Shanghai)

Audio rights

Vimbo

Film rights optioned

(now available)

Complete English,
German & French
translations
available

**Elena Shubina Publishing (AST)**

Novel, 2014

383 pp

Translation rights

World English World Editions (available since 2021)

Dutch De Geus

German btb

French Les Escales

Hungarian Europa Publishers

Lithuanian Tyto Alba

Macedonian Antolog

Serbian Agora

Estonian Tänapäev

Latvian Janis Rose

Albanian Fan Noli

Slovakian Slovart

Malayalam Green Books (India)

Mongolian Nepko

Bulgarian Prozoretz

Audio rights

Vimbo

*Film rights optioned*Complete English
translation available

The Italian Lessons

Over 55 000 copies
sold in Russia
since publication

Marina Stepnova, the national bestselling author of *The Women of Lazarus*, brilliantly weaves together a tragic love story and a Bildungsroman, resulting in a trenchant novel about a mad (and mad-dening) love, personal freedom, and the price one must pay for it.

We follow Ivan Ogaryov's life, from his bleak love-starved childhood, through the army and a tragic deadly accident, to his career as a therapist with a large clientele at a Moscow private clinic. The status quo had always been repellent to Ogaryov, yet at 42 years of age he is living a superficial, formulaic, predictable life. He has his work in the clinic, joyless marriage and sex, Sunday visits to his wife's parents, and Saturday shopping in a supermarket mall.

One day is all it takes for this life to collapse into ruins — the day that Ogaryov meets Malya (24), a girl who is truly exceptional. Their mad love affair sweeps Ogaryov out of his dreary existence into a heady “Master and Margarita” world, where the only things that matter are verse, food, love and...Italy.

Ogaryov gives up his long-standing marriage, leaving his deeply loving wife crushed; he quits his job (a stab in the back of his friend, the clinic's owner). He frequently travels outside “the systematically alien, joyless” country, relishing his new-found happiness. He is determined to protect their life together at any cost — but Malya chooses differently.

Told in a brisk manner, through shifting, masterfully paced sentences, the novel is rich in metaphor, and in

both hidden and explicit quotes and allusions to Russia's 20th century poetry and prose — from Vladimir Nabokov through Boris Pasternak to George Adamovich. In her third published novel, Marina Stepnova's by now mature voice rings with exceptional strength and clarity. It has struck a chord with a wide readership; the first printing of 7,000 copies was sold out two weeks after its release. It remained firmly in the top five of the bestseller lists of Moscow's major bookstores for an entire month after publication, and drew a lively response from the national critical establishment.

Marina Stepnova in an interview for *Vedomosti*: “One always pays for freedom, and in Russia (and not only in the Soviet era) the price has always been exceptionally high. On the other hand, freedom is the only thing worth paying this price for. Ogaryov loses everything he has: his country, his job, the woman he loves and who loves him, his social status. But in return he achieves something heretofore unimaginable — at long last he can live the way he had always dreamed about but never dared attempt, because he was always dogged by that very social status, with its family expectations, responsibilities, debts... Ordinary life — alien and importunate.”

Selected quotes

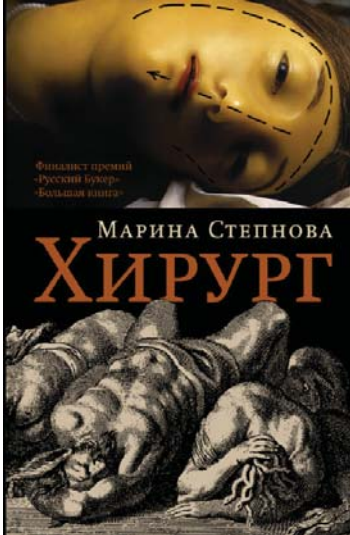
Marina Stepnova writes not simply well, but brilliantly: with ease, beauty, intellect, and authority. [She writes] generously, without constraint. Hers is an ample, weighted word, or rather a deposit of words, solid, juicy as apples, aromatic and definitive. Such a trove of words is a boon for any writer. Yet *Italian Lessons* offers more — this is a “novel with a key,” and with a key idea — and the idea is a sad one. The novel is so bitterly topical that it burns right through to the diaphragm.

Vedomosti

Stepnova's prose rightfully assumes special place in modern fiction. Her novels are lyrical experiences

told in prose. Sad stories witnessing to simple yet very important things, such as that every person deserves to love and be loved in return. *The Italian Lessons* is the author's new novel, and in it she remains true to herself and her chosen idiom. Aficionados of *The Women of Lazarus* will be happy to dive into the unconscious of her new characters, interpret their dreams, feel their pain. And, once again, to ascertain that Marina Stepnova's work is an elaboration of the traditions of Russian classical writers down the centuries.

prochtenie.ru

Nominated for the **National Bestseller Award 2005**


Astrel
 Novel, 2005
Elena Shubina Publishing (AST)
 Novel, 2013
 316 pp
Translation rights
 Mongolian Nepko
Audio rights
 Vimbo

The Surgeon

In her first novel, *The Surgeon*, the national prize-winning author of *The Women of Lazarus*, Marina Stepnova, intertwines the stories of a ruthless medieval religious fanatic and a modern, exceptionally gifted plastic surgeon to paint a grim portrait of a world utterly devoid of love.

Born in a small provincial town to a working-class family — an alcoholic father and a seductive yet simple-minded mother — Arkady Khripunov faces a bleak future: a beaten track of dull schooling, followed by dreary work at the town's only factory during the day and joyless hours of drinking and meaningless fighting with fellow workers in the evening. This inevitable routine is shattered when twelve-year-old Arkady ... dies. After recovering from a severe and nearly fatal meningitis attack, Arkady learns two facts: this world is ugly, and he is the one to correct it.

By the age of 35, Khripunov becomes an exceptionally gifted plastic surgeon, obsessed with a single mission: to create absolute beauty. An endless flow of flesh and bone before him — bearers of which dream only of becoming material for Khripunov's practice — drives the genius surgeon to the verge of despair, until he meets his Galatea. Unaware of Arkady's true motives, the girl eagerly agrees to become the subject of his experiment.

Hassan ibn-al Sabbāh is an all-powerful missionary in late 11th-century Persia. Founder of his own Islam-based religious doctrine, Hassan devotes his life to converting people to his faith. After successfully seizing the invincible fortress Alamut in the mountains of northern Iran, Hassan is regarded as nothing less than

God's chosen one. The ruler of Alamut directs a ruthless campaign against local lords of other doctrines and foreign political leaders. The mountain fortress serves for years as an ideal hideout and training base for Hassan's warrior pupils, carefully selected to carry out his life's mission. Trained through harsh discipline, terror, and ardent religious study, Hassan's soldiers become an invincible force, willing to stop at nothing to spread their leader's doctrine. They come to be called assassins or fedayins — "the martyrs" or "the men who accept death." Hassan himself is unafraid of death — nothing terrifies him, until one day he sees a young woman, his own daughter, whom he had ordered killed at birth.

These two alternating life chronicles converge into an original gospel. An immaculate stylist, Stepnova is ruthless to the world she portrays, sparing neither protagonists nor readers. The text mesmerizes irrevocably, with the irresistible beauty of Stepnova's prose, her absolute command of narrative pitch, penetrating atmosphere, and razor-sharp word choice. *The Surgeon* — a profound meditation on obsession, death, madness, and beauty — is an exceptional debut, a true manifesto heralding the arrival of a great literary master.

Selected quotes

Stepnova has fingers of a surgeon that know how to make an ideally pitched phrase. Stepnova has a masterly command of stylistic means and lexicon that equates the genius of her character's practice of surgical instruments. <...> Stepnova demonstrates a misanthropic vision of this world, yet has a most happy marriage with the language.

Lev Danilkin
Afisha

A beautiful, bright, remarkable novel about how tense and uncomfortable can it become in this loveless world for one who thinks of oneself as an *Übermensch*.

weekend.ru

This novel is a rare work of fiction that you can read without understanding and yet without an urge to understand at all cost.

snob.ru

An ultimately cruel, a mercilessly beautiful prose.

4itateli

About the author:

MIKHAIL TURBIN was born in 1986 in Velikiy Novgorod, a small town not far from both Moscow and St. Petersburg. Turbin graduated from the Moscow Forest Engineering Institute. He studied creative writing at CWS, curated by Maya Kucherskaya, Marina Stepnova, and Elena Kholmogorova. In 2023, Turbin was awarded a scriptwriting contract from Russia's leading film production company after successfully completing their creative writing course. A TV show resulting from this script premieres on a large Russian platform in autumn 2025.

Mikhail Turbin is a published writer of a dozen short stories. *Higher Up* is his first novel, which won him the second prize in Alexander Pushkin's Litsei Prize and was shortlisted for the Big Book Award in 2022.

Currently, Mikhail Turbin resides with his family in Velikiy Novgorod and works on the script for a new TV series, as well as his second, much-anticipated novel.



Selected Bibliography

2022 — **Higher Up**, *novel*

Awards

Shortlisted for the **Big Book Award** 2022

Alexander Pushkin's Litsei Prize (second prize) 2022

Shortlisted for the **Big Book Award** 2022**Alexander Pushkin's Litsei Prize** (second prize) 2022Two reprints since
publication**Elena Shubina Publishing (AST)**

Novel, 2022

317 pp

Translation rights

All rights available

*Film rights optioned**Theater rights*

Novgorod Drama Theater

TV series in
development

Higher Up

True Detective in a dreary setting of Russia's province.

With its bleak, haunting atmosphere and unflinching social insight, *Higher Up*, Turbin's riveting debut, delves into the darkness of human nature, echoes grief and loss, and traces the razor-thin divide between guilt and redemption.

Dr. Ilya Rudnev is a gifted physician working in the children's intensive care unit of a provincial hospital. Every day he fights for the lives of children, and for Rudnev this is more than a duty — it is a calling, if not an obsession. A year ago, in a single tragic day, he lost his wife and young son. Their deaths were not the result of an accident: his wife suffered from a mental condition that deteriorated during her pregnancy, but Rudnev loved her blindly, disregarding the alarming signals of her condition, which culminated in an unthinkable tragedy. Ever since, he has grappled with the burden of grief and an unbearable sense of guilt.

One night, an unconscious four-year-old boy, a victim of a hit-and-run, is brought into the ER — a boy who uncannily resembles Rudnev's dead son. Though the child's condition is critical, Rudnev manages to save him. But the boy has no name, and no parents are reported missing. The only information the hospital has is that he darted out of the forest into the path of a car. Examination reveals that many of his bruises predated the accident — clear signs of domestic abuse. The painful memory of his dead son compels Rudnev to uncover the truth and confront his own past.

Rudnev's search leads him to a nearby village, now in decay with only a handful of residents still dragging on. There, he discovers a home burned to

the ground. Locals claim the entire family perished — a father with three children — the fire so intense that the children's bones were reduced to ashes. The father drank heavily, and the family was considered troubled even by local standards. The police swiftly closed the case, ruling it a tragic accident. Haunted by the ghost of his son, Rudnev continues his search for connections between the hospital boy and the "perished" family.

When the boy eventually awakens, he appears terrified and insists that a wood goblin took him and his two sisters, locking them in a hideout. From his tangled tale, it becomes clear that he was hit by a car while fleeing a monster. He pleads with Rudnev to help find his sisters, still trapped somewhere in the woods.

Rudnev turns to the police, but they dismiss the child's story as fantasy, unwilling to reopen the case. With nothing left to lose, he embarks on a dangerous, solitary mission to find the missing children. For him, this is more than a rescue — it is a final chance at redemption.

Higher Up is a slow-burning noir thriller that grips readers with tense mystery while casting a piercing gaze at a society numbed by depression and indifference. Rudnev is no modern Don Quixote — he does not tilt at the injustices of the world. His actions are driven instead by the anguish of a man whose life lost all meaning with the death of his family. Yet, within this bleak descent, a glimmer of hope persists — hope for him, and for the children he saves. It is this fragile light that transforms the novel into not only a compelling thriller but also a truly healing read.

Selected quotes

This novel is a perceptive and precise diagnosis of contemporary Russia, written in an engaging, vivid style, with great love for its characters — and for us, its readers.

Maya Kucherskaya

Mikhail Turbin's novel is deeply human, tragic, and filled with love for the small, private life.

Grigory Sluzhittel

writer



About the author:

YANA VAGNER was born in Moscow in 1973 into a bilingual family. Her Czech mother had come to Moscow in the 1960s to study Russian language and literature. Yana graduated from Moscow State University with a degree in management and has worked as an interpreter, a radio anchor, and a logistics manager, a career that allowed her to travel extensively throughout Africa, Europe, and Latin America.

She began writing *To the Lake* as a weekly blog while a flu epidemic swept through Moscow. It later became a bestselling novel, translated into multiple languages and adapted into a Netflix series, followed by its sequel, *Truly Human*, and the stand-alone novels *Accomplices* and *The Tunnel*. Both *Accomplices* and *The Tunnel* are currently in development for film adaptations.

Selected Bibliography

2024 – **The Tunnel**, *novel*

2020 – **2068**, *novel*

2017 – **Accomplices**, *novel*

2012 – **Vongozero: Truly Human**, *novel*

2011 – **Vongozero**, *novel*

Awards

Finalist of the **Big Book Award** 2024

Finalist of the **Big Book Award** in the Audio Book nomination 2025

Laureate of the **Big Book Award** Reader's Choice (2nd prize) 2024

Reading 3.0 Award in the Most Anticipated Film Adaptation 2024

Financial Times Book of the Year 2021 (UK)

Herald Book of the Year 2021 (UK)

Longlisted for the **Big Book Award** 2017

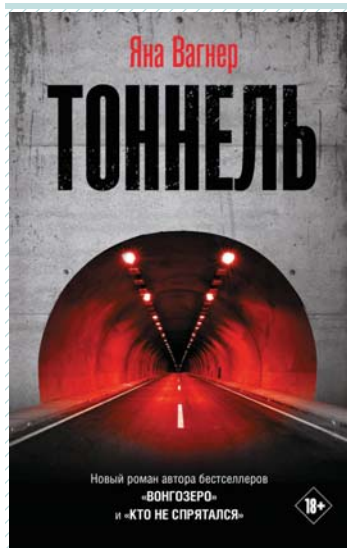
Shortlisted for **Prix Russophonie** 2015

Shortlisted for **Prix Bob Morane** 2015 (France)

Finalist of the **Grand Prix des lectrices Elle** 2015 (France)

Longlisted for the **New Literature Prize** 2012

Nominated for the **National Bestseller Prize** 2012, 2018

Winner of the **Big Book Award** Reader's Choice (2nd prize) 2024Finalist of the **Big Book Award** in the Audio Book 2025Selected for the **Booksellers prize of La Bête noir** 2025, France**Elena Shunina Publishing (AST)**

Novel, 2024

569pp

147000 words

Translation rights

French Robert Laffont

Bulgarian Labirint

Audio rights

Vimbo

*Film rights sold*Complete French
translation available

The Tunnel

Nearly **50 000** copies soldOver **100 000** e-book downloadsOver **120 000** audio downloads

A much-anticipated new novel from the internationally bestselling author of *To the Lake*, adapted into a compelling Netflix series and endorsed by none other than Stephen King himself. Yana Vagner is unsurpassed in navigating through the intricate shifts in human behavior under extreme circumstances.

A lengthy road tunnel, connecting Moscow with its suburban areas, stretches beneath a river's depths. It's the end of a July weekend, and traffic is congested: elderly dacha owners with cars packed to the brim with freshly harvested produce, families with infants securely nestled in child seats alongside bored teenagers slumping in the backseats, a smattering of pick-up trucks, vans, and refrigerated lorries, a vigilant police car, an opulent executive-class vehicle with tinted windows, and a tattered taxi blaring raucous music — a typical cross-section of urban diversity.

Midway through the tunnel, where radio signals have long vanished and mobile phones remain deprived of reception, the steady flow of cars abruptly halts. Initially, people are patient, assuming it's an accident up ahead or another road closure for an official motorcade. Yet the gridlock persists, and after a while, people begin to wonder, leaving their vehicles to strike up conversations. Impatience eventually gets the better of some, and a small group ventures toward the tunnel's exit, embarking on a trek of several kilometers. Their hasty return is accompanied by a panicking crowd and troubling news — there's no way out of the tunnel anymore. An explanation eludes them, rumors spread like wildfire, and panic takes root. The crowd retreats toward the tunnel's entrance, but it's barricaded with imposing railings and concrete gates — the same gates that had sealed the exit, tragically thwarting the escape attempt of a reckless car.

Initially, civility prevails as people await rescue. They exchange jokes, share water, and console each other's children. However, as hours pass without any sign of rescue, with mobile signals gone, and isolation

sets in — both from the external world and from different segments of the lengthy tunnel — reason gradually dissipates, replaced by mounting paranoia.

A sequence of unforeseeable events transforms law-abiding citizens into a frenzied mob. First, a criminal seizes the opportunity to escape from the police car, killing one officer in the process and acquiring a gun. Next, a group of contract construction workers resort to drastic measures, severing an electricity cable in a futile bid to breach the tunnel's walls. At the same time, an elderly, snake-like official finds access to a covert emergency bunker with a capacity limited to sixty occupants, prompting his assistant to execute a protocol to select survivors.

Following the massive electrical failure, the trapped individuals, confined underground with limited and rapidly depleting air, begin to act as though they're living through Judgment Day. As tensions escalate, they uncover the existence of a bunker stocked with air, weapons, and essential provisions, but discover that the available space proves insufficient for all.

In less than thirty hours since the lockdown, the gates slowly swing open, welcoming rescuers and ambulances. The true cause of the catastrophe is revealed to be an unprecedented cyber attack targeting the city's infrastructure and key transportation hubs. Emerging from the tunnel, exhausted and shaken, the survivors feel as though they've spent an eternity underground. They have miraculously escaped what can only be described as hell. However, for some, salvation never arrived.

Most anticipated film
adaptation

Selected quotes

A kind of extremely distressing dystopia.

Hélène Fischbach,

director of the international festival Quai du Polar

Yana Vagner's novel *Tunnel* tells the story of drivers and passengers unexpectedly trapped in an enclosed space beneath a river. This situation, more suited to

a thriller or a survival guide, serves the author to raise philosophical questions about the nature of power, social order, and human civilization. kind of extremely distressing dystopia.

Gorky.media

Nominated for the **National Bestseller Award 2018**Longlisted for the **Big Book Award 2017****Elena Shubina Publishing (AST)**

Novel, 2017

542 pp

Translation rights

French Mirobole Editions

French Poche

Czech Omega/Dobrovsky/ now available

Lithuanian Alma Littera

*Film rights sold*Complete French
translation availableFilm adaptation in
development

Accomplices

Nearly 70 000 copies
sold

Following the success of her bestselling snowy road thriller, *Vongozero*, Yana Vagner sets her new stand-alone detective mystery drama in ice and snow, but ignites it with passion, love and hatred to a blazing extreme.

A film crew arrives at a mountain skiing resort for a film shoot. The film producer rents a secluded hotel on the mountaintop a week before the shoot for a friendly getaway. On the first night of the weekly vacation, the lead actress is brutally murdered: someone pierces her twice with a ski pole and pushes her over the parapet, down to the rocks, leaving her to die under the onset of an icy rain.

In the morning, the group discovers that the cableway — the only connection with the outside world — is covered with ice and de-energized, the transmitter is crushed, no mobile signal is available in the area — and there is a dead body, frozen to a rocky mountain slope, a few meters away from a skiing path.

They are nine — now eight — lifetime friends and a morose, somewhat sinister, hotel manager — and one of them is obviously a murderer. Being cut off from the world, they run their own investigation. No one has an alibi, each has a confession to make, and each might want Sonya, the film's star, dead. For years, Sonya, an ingenious manipulator and prodigious actress, ruthlessly exploited and manipulated her friends, feeding on their love and despairs.

The friends must discover unpleasant truths about each other, confront the dark secrets of their own pasts, and break through the ice shell of their lifelong illusions.

The first suspicion falls on Tatiana, the scriptwriter. Tatiana, the author of one novel heralded by critics as a "bright promising debut," could not replicate her first breakthrough and had to switch to writing scripts. Her bitter, austere, and even aggressive personality clashes with her husband's conforming and benign nature. The secret glue of their marriage is Tatiana's infertility — a sad side effect of an abortion she had in the early years of their young marriage, prompted by her husband. Tatiana silently blames her husband for her failure as a mother, while Petya's feelings of guilt keep him loyal to their otherwise failed marriage. Petya has been hopelessly in love with Sonya, the victim, for years.

Masha, a smart journalist, has known Sonya since school, having introduced her to the rest of the group. She herself was a victim of family abuse as a child. Today, Masha is a charity activist, providing help for sick children from all over Russia. She has no family, and their friendship is

an ersatz of relations she subconsciously avoids.

There is Vadik, once a gifted and promising film director, now an alcoholic wasting his talent on countless cheap soap operas. For years he has desperately tried to finance his own feature film, but without success. For this failure, he blames Sonya, a celebrity who could help through her connections but prefers to seek investment for less risky TV projects.

There is Ivan, an affluent businessman and the film's producer. With his often indecent generosity, Ivan continuously attempts to overcome the social gap between him and the rest of the group — for the rest, he will always remain an unsophisticated provincial in an elitist group of Moscovites. For Laura, Ivan's young wife, this social difference is of no importance. With the looks of a fashion model and the same provincial childhood, Laura seems no more than a shallow hunter for Ivan's fortune. However, she is truly in love with her husband and is painfully dependent on him, desperately — and in vain — searching for his affection. But Laura, too, has a secret, and Sonya was the only one who knew what the young wife would hide from her adored husband.

Last but not least, there is Egor, a successful lawyer who cheats on his wife Liza. A housewife incarnate, Liza replaced love for her husband with dedication to their home — a dream house she so beautifully and passionately manages. Liza knows of her husband's infidelity; it is a silent part of their marriage treaty. But what if one of the affairs — their affair with Sonya — has crossed the invisible line?

During an improvised seclusion in an ice cell next to the mutilated dead body of a friend, the group alternates between investigators, testifiers, and even judges — but essentially remains accomplices. The heroes discover that their friendship, based on lies, illusions, and masks they eagerly put on, is a wobbly construction that shall not endure. Sonya's murder becomes the conviction binding them all.

In this flawlessly written drama, Vagner masterfully melds mystery-suspense, close character study, intense emotions, and social background. Vagner's recognizable "avalanche prose" style works brilliantly in this complex drama, making for an intense and true page-turning read.

Over **60 000** copies sold

Eksmo
2011
Elena Shubina Publishing (AST)
Novel, 2020
448 pp

Translation rights

English UK Skyscraper /original publisher
English UK Swift Press / new publisher
English US – Deep Vellum
French Mirobole Editions
French paperback Poche
Swedish Ersatz
Slovakian Ikar / now available
Slovenian Mladinska knjiga
Czech Euromedia / now available
Polish Zysk
Lithuanian Alma Littera
Latvian Zvaigzne
Estonian Varrak
Mongolian Nepko
Arabic AS Publishers / now available
Serbian Publik Praktikum
Greek Livanis Publishing
Ukrainian Book Club «Family Leisure»
Hungarian Helikon
Bulgarian Labirint

Audio rights
Vimbo

Film rights sold

Art Pictures, Russia
TV show acquired by Netflix Originals in 2020
TV series premiered April 2019
Fresh TV Fiction selection of 2020 MIPCOM

Vongozero

In her debut post-apocalyptic thriller Yana Vagner refers simultaneously to Stephen King's *The Stand*, Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* and the popular TV show *Man vs. the Wild* – and yet the author concocts a strikingly visionary survival story in its own right. Written at the time of the H1N1 flu epidemic and coming out as weekly entries in Vagner's blog, *Vongozero* – a haunting and arresting tale of a young woman who attempts to survive with her family during the throes of a pandemic – had already won thousands of readers before its publication as a book, setting off a heated auction among major Russian publishers. It has since become a bestselling novel, translated into multiple languages and adapted into a Netflix series.

What begins as a flu epidemic rapidly transmutes into a national catastrophe; but in the first days there is little panic. Anya, the story's narrator, 36 years old, was married three years before the events and now resides with her husband Sergei and her teenage son Misha in their country house outside of Moscow. They remain oblivious to the scope of the danger until the authorities send out troops to close down the major cities for entry, dooming their inhabitants to a swift yet painful death. Panic triggers violence, looting, and devastation.

Anya and Sergei have both left family members behind in Moscow. While Sergei succeeds in rescuing his ex-wife with their 3-year-old son, Anya's mother gets infected and dies in the city under siege. Anya's father arrives just prior to the appearance of the first looters in the settlement, a direct warning to the family. They choose to flee to a shabby getaway house at Vongozero Lake near the Finnish border, where Sergei had stayed a few times on hunting trips. Born of necessity, the expedition grows to eight adults and three children in four crossovers, loaded with belongings and fuel. Mortal danger draws together this weird and ill-assorted group of fellow travelers, speeding north across a rapidly deteriorating country.

Scheduled as a 48-hour journey, the road trip turns into twelve days of nightmare, marked by dreary

anticipation, grief, worry, and struggle. As this highway journey escalates into a test of ultimate survival, the travelers must find the strength and resources not only to fight against looming external dangers, but also to confront the deepest corners of themselves. There are no guarantees, no rules, and no truths outside those that help them survive. The road challenges the limits of human nature, measuring compassion against the thirst for living, and the strength of family ties against jealousy and exasperation — forcing each traveler to pay the utmost cost for survival.

The sweeping avalanche of a road story stops at its destination: a tiny shelter on the shore of the ice-covered Vongozero Lake in the freezing taiga forest. The protagonists now have time to weep for those who failed to reach the final point and to attempt to build a new routine, a new code, a new life, and possibly new selves from the ruins and rubble.

As horrifying as one's worst nightmares, the novel reads as a very plausible scenario. Yana Vagner demonstrates outstanding writing skills and deep psychological insight as she poses the simplest and at the same time the most complicated question to her characters and readers: what does it take to remain human in the face of mortal danger?

Complete
English & French
translations
available

Bestselling Netflix series

Financial Times Book of the Year 2021

Herald Book of the Year 2021

Shortlisted for Prix Russophonie 2015

Shortlisted for Prix Bob Morane 2015

Finalist of the Grand Prix des lectrices Elle 2015

Longlisted for the New Literature Prize 2012

Nominated for the National Bestseller Prize 2012



About the author:

TATSIANA ZAMIROVSKAYA is a writer, music critic, and journalist from Minsk, Belarus, who currently resides in Brooklyn, New York. She graduated with a degree in Journalism from Belarusian State University (2002) and received an MFA in Creative Writing from Bard College. Her journalistic works have been published in a variety of Belarusian, Russian, and Ukrainian media outlets. In Belarus, she worked as a magazine editor (*Jazz-Quad Magazine*, Belarus; *Doberman Magazine*) and as the arts and culture observer at *Belagazeta*, the most prominent Belarusian independent weekly newspaper. She also had a successful career as a music critic.

In 2015, Tatsiana moved to New York to earn her MFA at Bard College, where her thesis was an English-language novel-in-progress, *Silence Fiction*. In this project, she moved away from her native language, exploring the concepts of alienation and studying the effects of language insufficiency on memory, narration, and representation.

Tatsiana presented excerpts from this work-in-progress during readings at New York institutions such as Microscope Gallery (Brooklyn), How! Happening Gallery, Printed Matter bookstore, and Leslie Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art. In 2018, Tatsiana won a fellowship from the MacDowell Colony and, in 2019, was accepted to the VCCA artist colony.

Tatsiana is the author of three Russian-language short story collections: *Life Without Noise and Pain* (2010), *Sparrow River* (2010), and *The Land of Random Numbers* (2019), published by AST Publishing House in Moscow. Tatsiana's short stories have been published in Russian-language magazines worldwide. In 2018, her short story *Honeyfast* was awarded the Gorchev Award, a prestigious Russian prize for short fiction. *The Deadnet*, her debut novel, received nominations for the New Literature Award and the National Bestseller Prize in 2021. Film rights to the novel have been optioned; the English-language film series is currently in development.

Selected Bibliography

- 2025 — **The Candles of Apocalypses**, *autofiction novel*
- 2021 — **The Deadnet**, *novel*
- 2019 — **The Land of Random Numbers**, *short stories*
- 2015 — **Sparrow River**, *short stories*
- 2010 — **Life Without Noise and Pain**, *short stories*

Awards

- Shortlisted for **Andrei Belyi Award** 2022
- Shortlisted for **New Horizons Sci-Fi Award** 2022
- Shortlisted for **the New Literature Award** 2021, 2022
- Longlisted for **the Yasnaya Polyana Award** 2022
- Longlisted for **the National Bestseller Prize** 2020, 2021
- Dmitry Gorchev Best Short Story Award** 2018

Shortlisted for **New Horizons Sci-Fi Award 2022**

Longlisted for the **National Bestseller Prize 2021**

Shortlisted for the **New Literature Award 2021**

Longlisted for the **Yasnaya Polyana Award 2022**



Elena Shubina Publishing (AST)

Novel, 2021

576 pp

Translation rights

All rights available

Audio rights

Vimbo

Film rights optioned

**English translation
available**

The Deadnet

A literary star from Belarus presents a startling anti-utopia about the digital world of dead consciousnesses — *The Deadnet*. This collective space, constructed from individual memories, is home to digital backup copies, each activated after a person's death. This anti-Matrix reality is striking, vivid, and filled with memories, love, and dreams come true. It is an inefably beautiful world — one that's well worth dying for.

The not-so-distant future. Most illnesses have been eradicated, and human death is now caused primarily by virus outbreaks or terrorist attacks. As a coping mechanism, humanity develops technology that creates digital copies of human consciousness. Individuals can create digital backups of themselves, which are activated after death and can communicate with the living — but only with a limited number of family and friends. These copies are isolated from others and banned from interfering in the world of the living. To compensate for their inevitable loneliness, the government merges all the dead people's personal contexts and memories, creating an internet of the dead: the Deadnet. Here, digital copies can interact and even form relationships.

The protagonist, a woman in her mid-forties, wakes up “resurrected” as a copy, only to learn she was killed in a terrorist attack. She connects with her family and friends, but her loving husband astonishingly refuses to communicate with her. Her family avoids the subject, and after a series of failed attempts, she is forced to give up. She meets A., one of the first Deadnet inhabitants, and they begin a relationship.

Deadnet residents continue their struggle against “bioprivilege,” fighting for a voice in the real world. A revolution ensues: the dead invade the Internet of Things, taking over digital devices and appliances and wreaking havoc. The attempt is short-lived; the government unplugs the Deadnet, cutting it off from the real world. Yet their daring effort is not entirely in vain — the dead manage to steal millions of backup copies of the living.

Among these stolen copies is an earlier copy of the protagonist's husband. Because it was created before his wife's death, he is shocked to find himself on the Deadnet and even more stunned to discover his wife involved with another man. To investigate her own death, the married couple hacks into the real world and uncovers the awful truth: the protagonist did not die in a terrorist attack. She was brutally murdered by her husband, who is now in prison.

The murder investigation leads the protagonist to the headquarters of the Committee for

the Insurrection of the Dead, who help her hack into the otherwise cut-off real world. She manages to reach it in various forms — as an airport departure board, a robotic dog, and even a clone of a certain Eastern European dictator. She does this for the sake of the Deadnet, but also secretly for her own personal quest.

While her investigation proves fruitless, she uncovers a crucial piece of information: the government plans to shut down the Deadnet server completely. The Committee assigns her a mission to enable the portal for Deadnet self-download.

In a final effort to solve her murder mystery, she forges a portal not only into the real world but also through time. She travels to the moment of her murder and witnesses the act in the body of her own husband. Through his eyes, she observes her “real” self fighting him at a restaurant. As she rummages through his mind, she realizes he never intended to kill her. Yet she also knows that if she leaves now, her real self will survive, and none of the events that followed — her resurrection, her relationship with A., her new friends — would ever have happened. Moreover, the Deadnet itself would cease to exist. Her death proves to be the key to a new world, and she faces a choice.

This quantum detective thriller and metaphysical anti-utopia is a delight for inquisitive minds. Tatsiana Zamirovskaya takes readers on a challenging journey into the philosophical cosmos of Nikolay Fyodorov and Boris Groys, embedding concepts from speculative realism in the vein of Ray Brassier and Timothy Morton. In this witty page-turner, Zamirovskaya poses audacious existential questions: Is memory a gateway to eternity? How might the resurrection of the dead inform our understanding of free will? Is a digitalized consciousness truly alive?

She also invites readers to dwell on pressing social issues: life in isolation, dictatorships, institutionalized ghettos, and — above all — the ways in which we revolt.





The Deadnet

Selected quotes

The Deadnet, it seems, is an important cultural evidence or a symptom of modern reflections on the concept of “one” behind the speech.

Colta.ru

The debut novel by a young writer from Belarus, Tatsiana Zamirovskaya, reads as a techno thriller of a Black Mirror type in the beginning, continues as a ghost mystery, but is ultimately none of the above. The protagonist carries out a rather painful investigation of her own death, and this research makes the novel the rarest attempt in today’s literature to search for a new approach to talk about life, death and the nature of things, in general.

Galina Yuzefovich
meduza.io

In *The Deadnet*, a fantasy mystery thriller turns into a sequel to the popular essay *What Is It Like To Be a Bat* by Thomas Nagel, an American philosopher. Zamirovskaya develops his thesis — in her fiction world, it is not only living (or dead) people who have a form of individual consciousness, but also things, like a cactus or a stone. The novel’s universe becomes Borges’ *Mirror of Enigmas*, a system where each object carries a piece of information, and the signifier

merges with the signified. This all could make the text too high brow, but Zamirovskaya succeeds in coining a very lively world of the dead (the pun intended) and describes it with much humor.

Prochtenie

Everyone interested in the world’s current philosophical trends can find various up-to-date concepts to feed the inquisitive mind in Zamirovskaya’s novel. And it is not solely about philosophy, Zamirovskaya smartly introduces concepts and objects that will form the reality in the not-so-distant future. <...> Essentially, *The Deadnet* is not a space, where a story develops and characters interact — though the author draws both the plot and characters beautifully. The novel, in the end, becomes a platform for an intellectual exchange, a channel for the mind, heart and pure art.

Anna Berseneva
New Izvestia

With her novel Zamirovskaya strongly claims a title of the Russian China Miéville. *The Deadnet* is to me the best novel of the year.

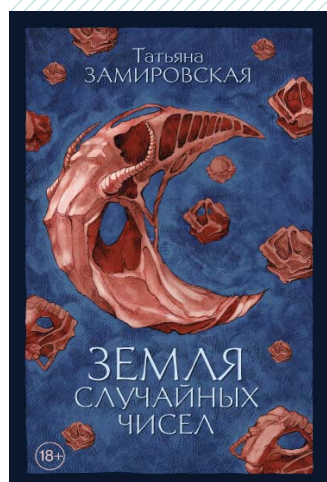
Alexander Gavrilov
a publisher and critic



Shortlisted for the New Literature Award 2021

Longlisted for the National Bestseller Prize 2020

Dmitry Gorchev Best Short Story Award 2018



Elena Shubina Publishing (AST)

Short stories, 2019, 2022

390 pp

Translation rights

All rights available

Film rights optioned

(now available)

English sample
available

The Land of Random Numbers

Stephen King meets Ursula K. Le Guin and Philip K. Dick in a fascinating feast of the imagination.

Reminiscent of Black Mirror with a dark metaphysical twist, *The Land of Random Numbers* is a collection of 23 stories exploring the “what if?” question. What if people reincarnated back in time in whole clusters? How about a game of Mafia, but with real murders? What if you could pass the trials of the Last Judgment during your lifetime? What if David Bowie didn't really die, and Joseph Beuys was not rescued and cared for by Crimean Tatars, but by teenage girls in a suburban summer home? What if you lost the ability to speak after a brain injury, yet a conscious, verbal part of your brain claimed a different personality? What if a new virus emerged, intertwining humans and nature into a global mystical “biotext”? And what do you do if you start hearing voices, one of them Stalin, the other an incoherent half-mute desperate to communicate?

Zamirovskaya's stories unravel in realities similar to ours, albeit with a touch of the fantastic. They evolve from themes of the mundane, bureaucracy, power, and family. In this transformed universe, time travel is possible, the world can change in the blink of an eye, familiar historical figures play completely

different roles, and an ordinary game can become far more threatening and sinister than ever imagined.

Tatsiana imbues her personal memories with the dark surrealism of totalitarian-era writing, ghost stories, and children's folklore, creating spine-chilling, absurd narratives about distorted norms, in which the surreal overtakes and becomes the norm.

Much inspired by metaphysical realism, Tatsiana skillfully intertwines ideas from quantum theory, neuroscience, and biology to explore the nature of reality, attempting to look beyond what we know and achieve a multi-dimensional perception of the world. With poetic language, exquisite metaphors, and mesmerizing rhythms, this captivating book draws the reader into the glimmering net of universal existential questions.

The Land of Random Numbers is a strikingly humane work about coming of age, violence, language deprivation, and broken memory — offering no easy answers, but vast spaces for contemplation.

Selected quotes

The author of this book is a stalker. She has a unique optics that allows her to cross the borderline between the real and the other worlds as if no such border has ever existed. From the inside of the text there seems to be no such borderline for you either, and you get to understand how the universe works, and you always knew it, of course, but somehow forgot. And now you remember again.

Yana Vagner

the internationally bestselling author of To the Lake

Razor-sharp, whimsical yet lucid prose of Zamirovskaya takes the reader by hand and leads through the looking glass to reveal one's real self. It is too late to close your eyes from fear and pretend you have not been there.

Natalia Lomykina

Forbes.ru

There's something wrong here, but what? While life is similar to art – its coincidents and inconsistencies, hopeful occurrences and recurrent turns of fortune – the real art is never similar to life. Or maybe, it is, though, with its misleading optics, a curved beam of light. Here it is, this curve, a frighteningly recognizable unrecognition. Here is my briefcase returned, but

maybe this one is not mine, after all, and belongs to someone else — or maybe, I am that someone. Zamirovskaya peeks into the other world which is intervening with our world, just like Kharm's messengers, causing sudden goosebumps all over the skin.

Matvei Yankelevich

a poet and translator (New York)

With every story, every episode, and word Zamirovskaya probes the world for its resistance, as a child first pokes with a stick what he is afraid to touch with his hands. Is it what it looks? And if different, is it good or evil, a truth or a lie? The answers often betray expectations, however, the author's optimism makes her continue with the research. Indeed, we only live as long as we continue to ask questions.

Anna Kozlova

the prize-winning author of F20

Each story is a puzzle in the labyrinths of mirrors, but the text has nothing to do with a calculated narrative. Love and memory spring here through the basement of the universe, a living organism fuelled with heart beats of readers and the writer alike.

Alexander Gavrilov

a publisher and critic



About the author:

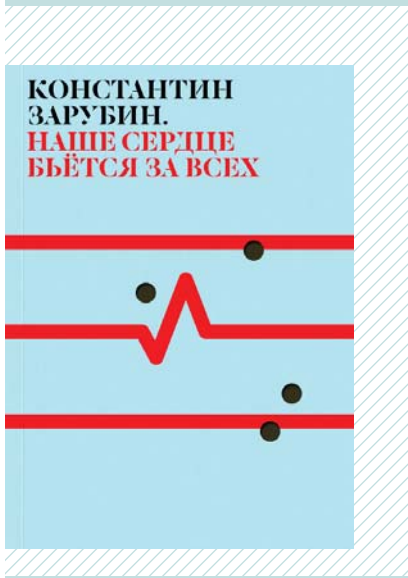
KONSTANTIN ZARUBIN is a professor of English language and linguistic studies at Dalarna University in Sweden. He writes fiction and essays, the latter with a focus on gender (female) studies and social issues. He is also a singer and songwriter. He moved to Sweden in 2008, where he now lives with his wife. The author's website — <https://kostia.me>.

Selected Bibliography

- 2024 — **The Russian Heart Beats for All**, *novel*
- 2023 — **New Science Fiction From L.**, *novel*
- 2021 — **The Red List of Peace Street**, *novella and short stories*
- 2021 — **Chestnut Freyja**, *novellas*
- 2021 — **Misha, It's Elephants All Around**, *novel*
- 2019 — **A Mayfly Walked Along the Shore**, *novel*

Awards

Shortlisted for **the New Horizons Award 2023**



Meduza

Novel, 2024
190 pp

Translation rights
All rights available

Audio rights
Litbuk

English and Swedish
samples available

The Russian Heart Beats for All

This alarmingly prophetic anti-utopia and bitter social satire by Konstantin Zarubin, a professor at Dalarna University in Sweden, reads unlike any other literary warning. Surgically precise, bold, and insightful, the novel highlights the most painful aspects of the social and political catastrophes affecting Russia and Europe today.

In an alternative 2023, Russia is torn apart by a civil war. European countries struggle to cope with millions of refugees from the collapsed Russian state.

The protagonist of the first part of the novel is Andrey Menyaev, once a bestselling writer with two film adaptations and a leader of Moscow's state propaganda apparatus. Today, Menyaev is a refugee, seeking residency in Scandinavia. Ironically, this leading figure of Moscow's media beau monde — cynical and clever — now fully depends on those he has always despised and mocked: good-hearted idealists. He is introduced to an Icelandic activist, a liberal intellectual, and a member of a covert organization helping refugees with immigration procedures. Will Harpa, his “beautiful Icelander,” as Menyaev calls her, succeed in defending their marriage before the experienced migration officials?

The main character of the second part is Danya Svechin, a talented digital artist who created deepfakes under Menyaev's supervision in Moscow. Fortunately, Svechin holds Estonian citizenship, and after the revolt in Moscow, he settles in a low-profile area in Estonia, far from the Russian refugee ghettos. There, alarming news reaches him: former colleagues from the Moscow propaganda factory have been brutally murdered by a lone terrorist or a terrorist group. Svechin receives protection from

the authorities in a new hideout under a false identity. His only connection to the past is Nika, a childhood friend and single mother who writes to him about life in the refugee ghettos. Nika tells Svechin about a group of illegal migrants resisting a local gang that terrorized her family, even though this might compromise their status in Estonia. The police detained the gangsters but deported the Russians back to their home country. Inspired by Nika's story, Svechin creates a comic book that becomes an international sensation. Eventually, he decides to meet Nika in person — and falls victim to the mysterious terrorist avenger.

Mira Iskalieva, from the final part of the novel, is one of the deported refugees and a heroine in Svechin's comic book. Her story follows her deportation to Moscow, where she is forced into sex slavery by local gunmen. Mira manages to escape and, with a group of teenagers, makes another desperate attempt to cross the Russian border.

Darkly humorous and frighteningly true to life, Zarubin's novel is more than a social satire or a warning. He deftly manipulates readers, translating the novel's events into a mirror of current political and social realities. Zarubin shocks with his prophetic insights and paints a vivid, broad picture of Russian-European relations.

Shortlisted for the **New Horizons Award 2023**

Elena Shubina publishing (AST)

Novel, 2023

512 pp

Audio rights

Litbuk

New Science Fiction From L.

A captivating literary odyssey, *New Science Fiction from L.* unveils nothing short of a universe — a world where magic happens, a world we live in, and a world that might have a future.

Helsinki, July 2020. A scientist who fled Russia to escape trumped-up treason charges is found dead outside his apartment. The task of sorting through his home library falls to Darja, a local student helping at a second-hand bookshop. In a huge atlas of Arctica, she discovers notes from a mysterious investigation the deceased had been conducting.

The scientist had searched for people from the former Soviet Union, now scattered across the globe — from Kazakhstan and Georgia, Finland and Italy, to Canada. In the recorded interviews, the subjects are asked to recall an anthology of sci-fi short stories. These stories appear to be written by authors of various origins — Latvia, Lviv (Ukraine), Leningrad, etc. — translated into Russian or published in their original languages. Despite differences in language, publishers, story titles, and author names, the plots and themes are strikingly similar. What's more, every reader describes their experience as nothing short of miraculous and life-changing.

Now Darja is set to continue the dead scientist's investigation, beginning with identifying the NSFL readers' club, whose members, it turns out, hired him in the first place. This decision sets off a breath-taking chain of events that will turn Darja's dreamy pandemic summer upside down — and might change the future of our civilization.

New Science Fiction from L. is a gripping literary quest set on the eve of a new European war and in the twilight years of the Soviet empire. It speaks in many voices and takes the reader to many places — from Kyiv and Tbilisi in the 1980s to Riga, Bologna, and St. Petersburg in the 2010s.

Both a compassionate tale of self-discovery and an unflinching reckoning with toxic nostalgia, *New Science Fiction from L.* offers a glimpse of what Russophone literature can achieve when it moves beyond navel-gazing and engages with the world beyond Russian imperial myths.